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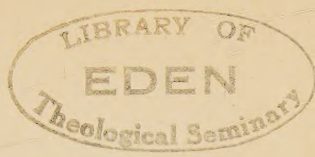


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BIBLE STUDY
FOR
BIBLE STUDENTS
VOL. III
J. BRAD CRAIG



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BIBLE STUDY

FOR

BIBLE STUDENTS

Vol. III

BY

J. BRAD CRAIG

*National Bible School Secretary of the
United Presbyterian Church*

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is not to present a "Life of Christ." Many such books have been written.

Bible study for Bible Students is a series of textbooks intended for use in the Bible School. Their aim is to present the facts of the Bible in a logical and pedagogical order from the beginning, and in such teachable form that the progressive revelation of God and its relation to modern life will not only be clearly shown, but will stimulate an interest in Bible study on the part of the pupil. The Bible school teacher's problem, when reduced to its lowest terms, is to so present the facts of the Christian religion that the mind and spirit of the pupil may become sensitive to the quickening power and corrective function of the Holy Spirit. "And I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, will draw all men unto myself." This third volume of the series presents the facts of the New Testament.

The questions asked at the close of each lesson are intended to challenge the thought of the pupil and to bring to the surface for discussion and analysis many important subjects about which pupils hesitate to ask questions.

The Bible text should be read by each pupil as a part of the lesson preparation. A bibliography is also given for those who desire to do more intensive work than is presented in this text.

The quotations and places named in lessons 50, 51, and 52 should be given definite consideration when the lesson is studied which involves any of these quotations or places. These three lessons will thus serve a larger purpose of review.

The author desires to acknowledge his appreciation of the assistance rendered him by Rev. R. L. Lanning, D.D., who read the manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

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LESSON 1

The New Testament

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. There are 27 books in the New Testament.
 2. There are in the New Testament, 275 quotations from the Old Testament and 700 direct references which cannot properly be considered quotations.
 3. The first book of the New Testament to be written was probably Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians and was written near the end of his ministry.
-

A Record of Jesus.—The New Testament is not an autobiography. No record is found of Jesus having written anything except a few characters which he wrote on the ground. The entire New Testament, however, places Jesus at the center. It is written concerning him. Many manuscripts have been lost which probably included additional information concerning his early life, his personality, and his work. Other manuscripts which concern Jesus and the development of the Christian Church, such as the apocryphal gospels, have been preserved, but they have not been accepted as a part of the New Testament Canon.

The Old and the New Testament Related.—The facts of the Old Testament serve as an important and worthy foundation on which the Christian religion was constructed. From the time of God's promise to Abraham to the final words of Jesus before his ascension, the history of the Hebrews is but the record of a people through whom a substantial religion and a dependable faith were being perfected. The resurrection of Jesus confirmed all prophecy concerning

the Messiah, and stimulated the faith of those who had followed him.

Order and Material of the New Testament Writings.—The books of the New Testament were not written in the order in which they are found in our Bibles. However, in the fourth century A.D., the present order was established as being the most effective and most natural.

The books of the New Testament contain the following:

1. A record of the facts concerning the life of Jesus.
2. Christ's interpretation of the law and his standard for human conduct.
3. The fundamental principles of the kingdom over which the Messiah was to rule.
4. A constitution and by-laws for the Christian Church.

Writings Considered Scripture.—Writings coming from three sources were considered inspired:

1. Writings which contained the words of Jesus.
2. Writings of the apostles who were supposed to speak with divine authority.
3. Writings of the Christian prophets which were assumed to be messages from God.

Religious Sects.—A sect is a group of individuals who have specific characteristics which distinguish them from others of the same general faith. Certain religious sects had developed and were prominent among the Jews at the beginning of the New Testament record. Each had a prominent characteristic which distinguished it from all others.

The Sadducees. These were the political aristocrats among the Jews who cultivated the good will of the Roman government. Consequently, they controlled the administration of the temple services at Jerusalem, and held the position of high priest. In their religious doctrine they adhered to the Mosaic law as it was found in the Pentateuch, but rejected all traditions which had been added thereto. They opposed any belief in angels, spirits, the resurrection of the dead, and the immortality of the soul. They believed in the freedom of the will and the right of choice in all matters touching conduct. Rewards and punishments came in this world, and were awarded according to the merits of each individual. Their chief interests were society, politics, and leadership. Morality was their highest attainment.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Essenes. The Essenes attempted to develop a philosophy of conduct based on an ideal standard of purity. All property was held in common, commerce was forbidden, temperance in all things was expected, care was given the needy, war was considered sinful, and slavery was not tolerated. According to their philosophy, the fate of every individual was definitely determined. Over his destiny he had no control.

The Pharisees. The essential elements in the doctrine of the Pharisees were a belief in the resurrection of the dead, immortality of the soul, a simple and frugal life, foreordination, and the exercise of a free will. The laws of Moses and all sacred traditions formed the authority for their creed. Their religion was distinctly marked by an offensive pretense and a formalism which were not sincere. The Pharisees pretended much in their own perfection, although their spiritual life was based on nothing more commendable than a thin veneer of outward show. This probably was the cause of the Master's bitterest words, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

The Scribes. This group included those who were marked by their learning and their ability to interpret the law. In general, they belonged to the Pharisees in doctrine. The "lawyers" of the New Testament belonged to this group.

The Herodians. The Herodians were the Jewish nationalists and supported the policies of Herod's government.

The Zealots were opposed to all outside or foreign interference in Jewish affairs, and consequently opposed the Roman government and the Herodian party.

The Coming of the Messiah.—Why did not the Messiah come in the days of Noah or Jacob? This question cannot properly be detached from the other mysteries of God. The same question may be asked concerning many individuals who have made distinct contributions to the sum of human knowledge and human progress. Thomas A. Edison did not come into the world until his inventive genius could be used to give the world the incandescent light and the phonograph. Apples fell to the ground long before Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravitation. It seemed necessary that the Jews should first be taught the nature of law, the power of Jehovah, and the necessity for obedience before they could properly listen to the messages of Jesus. The

Aryan people had come from the north into Greece and, during a period of a thousand years, had developed a culture, a philosophy, and a glory which fertilized the intellectual life of all nations. The practical and constructive common sense of the Romans had conquered the world and had not only built its roads and bridges, but had organized its governments for a coming civilization. The pagan religions had degenerated into the terror of darkness, while humanity was groping about for some ray of light which might lead outward and upward to a better day. When these things had been accomplished, the Son of God came into the world.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the circumstances in which Jesus wrote on the ground?
2. What is meant by the New Testament Canon?
3. Name three distinct and significant moral and religious opportunities which God gave the people of the earth prior to the coming of Christ.
4. What moral or religious opportunity, if any, was given humanity by Jesus' ministry and death which was not given those who lived prior to his birth?
5. Did Peter probably have any of the New Testament record when he preached on the day of Pentecost??
6. Name one characteristic of each of the religious sects which were prominent at the beginning of the New Testament record.
7. Which of these sects seemed to have the most rational doctrine? In what particular, if any, was its belief or creed deficient?
8. What did the Master's condemnation of the Pharisees indicate concerning his standard for measuring sin?
9. In what particular, if any, were the Pharisees to be censured for their attitude toward the law and formal religious ceremonies?
10. Who decided what should be accepted or rejected as a part of the inspired Record?



LESSON 2

Conditions in Palestine

Geography.—The Land of Palestine is probably the most remarkable district on the surface of the earth. It is little wonder that God selected it as a Promised Land for his chosen people.

Although it is very little larger than the state of New Hampshire, it possesses a greater variety of natural products, climate, and land surface than any other equal area. On the top of Mount Hermon, at an elevation of 9,000 feet, is perpetual snow, while tropical heat may be found in the southern valley of the Jordan, where the depression below sea level at the Dead Sea is 1,300 feet. The western section along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea is a plain, in width about 20 miles. The Jordan Valley is separated from this plain by a mountain range which extends from the wilderness of Paran on the south to the plain of Esdraelon on the north. East of the Jordan River is an elevated plain or plateau which extends eastward to the Syrian Desert. This plateau was called Perea in New Testament times.

Since the time the spies brought the grapes, pomegranates, and figs, from Canaan to Moses, great changes have been witnessed in this land. The forests have been removed and consequently much of the land has become barren. Its natural beauty and productiveness, for which it had been called "a land flowing with milk and honey," has largely disappeared.

The location of Palestine at the cross-roads between Babylon and Egypt, between Persia and Greece, between Syria and Rome, and between Asia and Europe, has caused it to become the battle ground of the surrounding nations. Opposed to this scourge was the great advantage of being in a cen-

CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

tral location from which the influence of the Christian religion might more easily reach the world. No better site could have been selected for the ministry of the Son of God.

At the beginning of the Christian era, Palestine comprised four divisions. Perea included the plateau district east of the Jordan, Galilee was located between Lake Galilee and the Mediterranean, Judaea occupied a similar position west of the Dead Sea, and Samaria was located between Galilee and Judaea.

Commerce.—The important industrial interests among the ancient Hebrews were fishing and agriculture. During the time of Peter, James, and John, more than 3,000 fishing boats might have been seen in operation on Lake Galilee. Farming activities included the production of fruit, raising of sheep and cattle, and the production of grain. Many other industries contributed to the prosperity of the Hebrews. Oil, honey, and balm were shipped to Tyre, a commercial city of Phoenicia. Solomon secured the gold for the first temple from Arabia.

The high priest, physician, and scribe represented the professional classes. Special recognition was given to the scholarship of the scribe whose chief interest was the law.

The greater part of Palestine's commerce was controlled by the Jews, although in Galilee and particularly in Samaria many non-Jewish merchants were found. Competition, however, has never brought embarrassment to the Jews.

Government.—Herod the Great, under the jurisdiction of Rome, had become king of Palestine 40 B.C., and continued in authority until after Christ was born. At his death his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip II, became rulers of the four parts into which Palestine had been divided. Archelaus became ruler in Idumea, Judaea, and Samaria; Herod Antipas became ruler of Galilee and Perea; and Herod Philip II became ruler of the region east of Galilee, north of Perea, and south of Iturea. The title given to these rulers was "tetrarch," or ruler of a fourth part.

When Rome first came into power in Asia, Gabinius, the proconsul of Syria for the Roman government, came to Judaea and reorganized the entire government of the Jews according to the Roman plan. Previous to this time the affairs of the government had been administered by two

courts and a high priest, or governor. These courts were an inferior court of twenty-three members located in every city, and a central court of seventy-two members, called the Sanhedrin. As a substitute for this plan, Gabinius divided Judaea into five districts with a council of five members in each district who were directly responsible to the Roman government. This plan of government continued until 43 B.C., when Cæsar appointed Hyrcanus king of Judaea. The title of king in Judaea represented little more than an executive manager and collector of taxes.

The Sanhedrin continued to retain a degree of authority in hearing cases that were brought before it. At the beginning of the Christian era the four districts of Palestine were ruled by governors or tetrarchs, as the chief executives or agents of the Roman government. In A.D. 26, Pontius Pilate became ruler, or procurator, of Judaea, and continued in office until after the crucifixion of Jesus.

Religion.—The religion of the Jews had its origin in the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel in the Garden of Eden. The laws of Moses, the teaching of the prophets, and the ceremonies of the high priest, had subsequently developed a religion which represented in the minds of the Jews a faith in a living God and a sovereign Jehovah, the necessity of obedience to law, and the value of ceremonial worship. The experiences of the Children of Israel had led them to attach much importance to formal worship and formal obedience to the law. This rigid legalism of formal worship had almost crowded from the minds and souls of the Jews every tendency toward individual thought. In matters of morality, their ability to think rationally on such subjects as mercy, kindness, forgiveness, and kindred manifestations of life, had become dwarfed. Their worship and their obedience to the law had become formal, instead of the expression of a life under spiritual control.

This worship had come to be restricted to sacrificial worship in the temple in which the high priest officiated, and was further emphasized by the recognition of special religious feasts which the Jews were required to attend.

The scribes were the learned men or lawyers who studied and wrote concerning the law. Their greatest source of study was the tradition of the fathers. The original purpose of their elaborate and technical ceremonial requirements

CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

probably came from a desire to worship God in a more perfect manner than they considered possible by simpler forms. Regardless of their original intention, the result of such worship was a mechanical and formal servitude to the law and the regulations of the priests.

The religious creed of the Jews prior to the Christian era included the following:

1. The righteousness and sovereignty of a living God.
2. Salvation by faith through sacrifice.
3. Belief in an ideal state or golden age in preparation for which a Deliverer would sometime come.

This religious creed had degenerated to such a material basis that the vitality of their aspirations came to be associated with the earthly honor, worldly power, and political success of national independence. For this reason they did not properly interpret Jesus when he appeared, and for this reason they condemned him to die.

QUESTIONS

1. Locate on a map the territories over which Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Herod Philip II had jurisdiction subsequent to the death of Herod the Great.
2. Prior to Roman control in Judaea, what type of government prevailed?
3. What was the relationship of Herod Philip I and Herod Philip II?
4. Give one illustration of the prosperity and wealth of the Jews in the days of David or Solomon.
5. Name three features of the land of Palestine which indicate its fitness for the development of a chosen people.
6. Name two essential differences between the religion of the Jews prior to the Christian era and the religion of modern Christians.
7. Upon what did salvation among the ancient Jews depend?
8. Name two prominent religious tendencies of modern Christians which are in any way analogous to the religious formalism of the ancient Jews.

LESSON 3

The Jewish People

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. The number of Jews in the world at the present time is estimated at 15,580,000, of which number 1,643,000 are in New York City. Only 83,794 Jews were found in Palestine in 1922.

2. The Jews are returning to Palestine at the rate of approximately 2,000 each month.

3. Efforts have been made by the World Zionist Organization to rebuild Palestine as a Jewish National Home. Over 5,000,000 trees have been planted since the World War, special sanitary regulations have been made effective, a new water supply for Jerusalem has been established, and a definite registration of land titles has begun.

4. A civil government is provided in Palestine under the general control of Great Britain. The Holy Land was captured from the Turks December 9, 1917, by British troops under General Viscount Allenby. It had been in the control of the Moslems since 1244.

History.—The Jews, as a distinct people, began their history with Abraham.

Abraham left his home in Ur of the Chaldees by divine direction and traveled westward to a place God designated for him. Isaac, a son of Abraham, married Rebekah, and from this mating was produced the twins, Esau and Jacob.

Jacob married Leah, his cousin, and from this mating was produced Levi, the great-grandfather of Moses.

Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel, was instrumental in

protecting the lives of his father's family from famine by inviting them to Egypt, where he held a responsible government position.

Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt, where they had lived a life of servitude for 430 years, and served them as leader in the Wilderness for a period of 40 years.

Joshua led the Jews into the Promised Land. As their military leader, he subdued their enemies and established them in their new home in Canaan.

During the years of national construction the following names were prominent in Jewish history: Ruth, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Eli, and Samuel.

Because of the earnest request of the people and by God's permission, Samuel established Saul, the son of Kish, as the first king of the Jews in Canaan.

David, the son of Jesse, succeeded Saul as king, subdued all of Israel's enemies, and made special preparations for building the great temple.

Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, erected the temple for which his father had begun preparations.

Following Solomon's administration the kingdom of the Jews was divided into two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. After variegated experiences of success and failure as a divided kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians, 718 B.C., and the Kingdom of Judah met with a similar fate at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, 586 B.C. During the time of this national division the following individuals were important characters: Jeroboam, Rehoboam, Asa, Ahab, Jezebel, Jehosphaphat, Jehu, Athaliah, Jehoash, Azariah (Ussiah), Hezekiah, Manassah, Josiah, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum and Jeremiah.

During the seventy years of captivity Ezekiel was the prophetic teacher of the Jews, while Daniel was honoring the name of the great Jehovah by his life and counsel among foreign officials. With the return of the Jews to their native land, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah served their people as leaders and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi assumed, in a large way, the responsibility for their spiritual counsel and guidance. The years of national reconstruction in their home land following the captivity were full of sorrow, oppression, and hardship. During the Maccabean independence, which

began 167 B.C., the Jews experienced a partial freedom until, in 62 B.C., the Roman power under Pompey ended the national life of the Jews.

Physical Characteristics.—Every form of life develops its own physical characteristics. This change is caused by a biological inheritance and an environment which is both social and physical. The prominent nose, the alert eye, and the persistent countenance of the Jew have stamped him as a distinct individual since the days his existence was first recorded in the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. His unique personality and his unconscious aggressiveness mark his presence in every group.

This divinely chosen people, a race that can count among its sons such men as Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and Isaiah; for whose benefit the sun stood still, and the waters of seas were divided; for whom a special land was provided, as good as God could select; through whom the world's greatest religion was given to mankind; and from whom even the Savior of the world was produced; has lost its glory and become an outcast upon the face of the earth. The Jew, whose very name has become a by-word, the most hated and most persecuted of all men, a pioneer and a refugee of all lands, has, through his sorrow and affliction and by the strength of his own initiative, entered all professions and industries, and now dictates the financial policy of the world.

Religion.—Notwithstanding the peculiarities of the Jew, and regardless of whether or not his conduct and history merit the approbation of a righteous judgment, he represents the purest religion ever conceived by human thought. No individual has surpassed the Jew in his sensitiveness to spiritual truth, and no race has been able to reach closer to the mind of God. It was such a quality of soul that enabled Abraham to follow God's voice, Moses to see the burning bush, and Elijah to stake his very life on God's response to a simple faith. It was the Jew who was first able to grasp a true and living faith, and it was the Jew who first was able to see God's face and to get the divine message.

Through the varied experiences of the Jewish people under Jehovah's guiding providence, and because of their belief in the justice and goodness of God, they were able to develop a spiritual consciousness which ballasted their faith in the stress of oppression and suffering. No power but the

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

religion of the Hebrews, which was begun in the Old Testament and perfected in the New, could qualify David to write the Shepherd Psalm or Paul to say "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." The Greek was susceptible to influences of beauty and the Roman was quick to grasp the efficiency of political organization, but the soul of the Hebrew was most sensitive to the spiritual message which came from God.

QUESTIONS

1. Name in a chronological order ten important individuals in Jewish history.
2. Name two advantages that have come from the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.
3. Have the Jews shown any particular genius for political organization which would probably safeguard Palestine as an independent state?
4. Name three Jewish characteristics in the order of their importance.
5. What was the most significant cause for the persecution of the Jews?
6. Does the predominant religious and ethical element of the ancient Jewish people continue to manifest itself in the Jewish people of today?
7. What is the belief of modern Jews concerning Jesus, the Christ?
8. What feature of the ancient Jewish religion is probably most prominent in modern Jewish religion?

LESSON 4

The Coming Messiah

Text: Isaiah 40, Malachi 4, Psalm 22.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. The word Messiah means anointed, and refers to the Deliverer on whom the prophets in the Old Testament based their hopes.

2. Paul seemed to have believed that the Messiah existed from the beginning and that he appeared on the earth in the person of Jesus.

3. The belief in a future ideal state or golden age was common among many non-Jewish people. Among the Hebrews the idea was focused on the coming Messiah.

4. The hope of a divine Deliverer became very prominent among the Hebrews after the captivity. This hope was expected to be realized either by a revolt followed by political independence, or by some divine and miraculous power in which military force might, or might not, be a factor.

A Developing Idea.—The Hebrew conception of a Messiah was a gradual growth. Eleven important references in the Old Testament mark its development.

1. Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." The victory of Jesus over sin is interpreted as the end of this enmity.

2. Genesis 9:26, "And he said, blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem." In these words Noah seemed to have a definite conception of the power and influence of Shem's family

THE COMING MESSIAH

if not a vague conception of the coming Messiah. From one of Shem's descendents Christ was born.

3. Genesis 12:2, 3. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The blessings which Noah bestowed on his son Shem again converge in this promise of God to Abram.

4. Genesis 49:10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be." Here Jacob announced the coming Deliverer as an individual to whom obedience would be given.

5. Deuteronomy 18:18, 19. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Moses here referred to a coming prophet of great power. This prophet was unquestionably the Messiah. (See John 5:46.)

6. Numbers 24:17. "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh; there shall come forth a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite through the corners of Moab, and break down all the sons of tumult." In this reference Balaam suggested a deliverance from oppression which may have been realized in David (2 Samuel 8:2), or in the Messiah.

7. Psalms 110:1, 2. "Jehovah saith unto my lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." As the divine revelation developed, the idea of a coming Messiah became clearer. Not only is he announced in a number of the Psalms as an individual, but as a King, an Anointed, and as a descendent of David.

8. Isaiah 11:1. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." Isaiah proclaimed the coming Messiah to be a King and a Ruler who would not only restore the Jewish nation, but purify their religion.

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

9. Micah 5:2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." As the Old Testament record nears its close, the idea of the coming Messiah became still more vivid. In this reference the prophet, Micah, even names the place of his birth.

10. Haggai 2:9. "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts." The coming of the Messiah is here heralded as the time of the second temple.

11. Malachi 3:1. "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts."

The prophet Malachi, in unmistakable words, proclaims the coming of the Anointed and also his forerunner.

Many other statements may be found in the Old Testament which suggest the coming of a Deliverer. These eleven references, however, state in a concise way the growing belief in the coming of one in whom the hopes of the ancient Hebrews were centered. It is to be remembered that the Jews, and in particular the Pharisees, expected a temporal king. This idea may have been caused, or at least stimulated, by the foreign oppression to which the Hebrews had been subjected since the domination of the Syrian rulers. Even the Apostles, prior to the Resurrection, seemed to have considered Jesus as merely a Deliverer from the oppression of foreign states. Matthew 20, 21. Luke 24. Acts I. Although they believed this Deliverer was to be preeminently a King, yet they conceived him to be also a Priest and a Prophet. They hoped he would not only free them from their political problems and hardships, but also lead them into all truth and perfect their faith. Psalms 40 and Isaiah 2 and 11.

The growth of the idea of a Messiah cannot be attributed to any other source than divine revelation. This conviction is confirmed by the fact that the Old Testament record points directly to the benefits of the coming Messiah being shared by the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This opinion could not have originated with the Jews who resented such a possibility.

The Preparation of the Hebrews.—The coming of Christ was not an accident. Preparations had been made for his appearance. The Old Testament, from its beginning, is but the record of a people who were taught to recognize those essential religious factors which have come to be considered important elements in the great foundation of the Christian religion. These principles were a belief in a living, righteous, and sovereign God; the necessity of repentance, confession, and obedience; and the value of worship and reverence. The entire history of the Jews from the time of Abraham was a specific preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The Preparation Made by the Gentiles.—Even the Gentile world unconsciously prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom. The Greeks developed a quality of thought and a literature which were peculiarly adapted to the expression of the Christian faith of the New Testament. Rome pacified and organized the political world, and, by the building of roads and other national improvements, rendered the distribution of the Christian faith possible. Pagan religions had failed to bring to the human soul that solace and contentment for which humanity had been blindly groping since time began. Crime, oppression, cruelty, and misery seemed to have crowded in upon the human race. Never in the history of the world did the future seem more hopeless. Well might the benighted world have said with a profounder significance than the poet ever knew:

“Black is the badge of hell,
The hue of dungeons,
And the scowl of night.”

Such was the world condition at the beginning of the New Testament. Into such a world, Christ came to establish the kingdom that “whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the Messiah?
2. From what did the Jews desire most to be delivered?

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

3. Give from memory two Old Testament references which specifically suggest the coming of a Deliverer or Messiah.

4. Why did not the Jewish belief in a future golden age cause them to give greater consideration to the teaching of the prophets?

5. Name three experiences of the Jews following the captivity which probably increased their hope in a coming ideal state.

6. Is the divine revelation of a coming Messiah or leader, which the ancient Hebrew received, to be considered miraculous and essentially different from information received in modern days?

7. Name two specific lessons given in the Old Testament which are intended to teach that God is a living, righteous, and sovereign God.

8. In what two particulars was the religion of the ancient Jews superior to pagan religions?

9. Name one cause for the failure of the Jews to properly estimate the true nature of the coming Messiah.

10. How is the Christian religion able to alleviate the suffering and correct the evil which existed at the time of Christ's coming?

LESSON 5

The Incarnate Jesus

Text: John 8:12-32.

The Incarnation.—The word *incarnation* means the act of assuming a human form and a human nature. In Christian theology the word means the act of Christ, the second person of the Trinity, in assuming a human nature and living as a man on the earth. It is more difficult to know Jesus as a man than to recognize him as divine.

The Story of Jesus: A Fact of History.—The story of Jesus is not a myth but has been substantiated both by the Bible statement and by antagonistic historians. The Bible story of his life is largely limited to the four Gospels, and a few incidents related by the Apostle Paul. The fact that these Bible authors wrote independently, and that their records of Jesus show a remarkable harmony, adds great weight to the truth of the facts they relate. In A.D. 115 Tacitus, the Roman historian, referred to Jesus in his *Annals* as the founder of the hated group called Christians, and stated that he was executed by Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. Josephus, the Jewish historian, referred to the condemnation of Jesus, who was called Christ.

Jesus a Realization of Prophecy.—The coming of a Messiah was an event for which the Jews had been hoping, and toward which the facts of the Old Testament had been pointing. From the time of Adam to the close of the prophecy of Malachi, the prophets had foretold his coming and in some instances had even indicated the place of his birth and the character of his work. As the time of his coming approached, the political powers of the world seemed

to have been guided by a divine and controlling hand in locating their dominions and determining their boundaries.

The work Jesus did while on the earth and the subsequent influence of the religion he taught, proclaim him to be the divine Messiah and Deliverer. No individual has had greater influence on the history of the world or on the lives of individuals, either before or after the Christian era, than Jesus of Nazareth.

Various Conceptions of Jesus.—Many individuals have repeatedly attempted to explain in scientific terms the Gospel story of Jesus. Some, from their limitless imagination, have attempted to construct arguments which would tend to prove that the story of his life on earth is but a beautiful legend developed from the superstitious minds of an ancient world. Others believe Jesus to have been a great teacher, a great prophet, and a great personality, but that he was born like other men, lived like other men, died like other men, and remained dead. Out of the mystic explanations of those who have attempted to dispose of the Christ of the New Testament, have come religions which contain something of truth but more of error; much of reason, but little of comfort; not a little of the heroic, and certainly less of mercy. All alike have, without one single exception, failed in their efforts to construct a substantial religion. They have failed because they omitted the incarnate Son of God, and have consequently brought little of contentment and happiness to the human soul.

These rationalistic jugglers have constructed only a code of ethics for moralists, a weak philosophy for theorists, and a formal religion for the irreligious who are anxious to find a half excuse for doing what they want to do and thinking what they want to think. The tests of rigid investigation and the rabid criticism of critics have not been able to remove the fact of Jesus from the history of the world, nor from the center of human progress. He remains pre-eminently the greatest character in all history, the greatest benefactor of civilization, and the divine Saviour of men. Many continue to love him, some persist in hating him, but no man has ever ignored him.

The Prominence of Jesus.—The fact of Jesus cannot easily be concealed. Our calendar marks his birth. His name is written large in literature. The sacred cross found

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on churches, on mountainsides, in cemeteries, and even by the roadside, proclaim the crucifixion of the Son of God.

Christ's Purpose in the World.—To behold Jesus and to adequately estimate his mission, requires a spiritual sense or discernment which is not possessed by those who seriously question his existence. There is no beauty in the sunset until some soul is capable of appreciating it. Music has no harmony for him who has no music in his soul.

Christ came into the world to offer himself as a sacrificial substitute for those who would, in sincerity and belief, accept him as their Saviour. He came to forgive sinners and not to punish them. He came into the world to strengthen the weak, counsel the wayward, relieve the burdened, console the sorrowing, uplift the down-trodden, comfort the dying, and to save souls from eternal death. No more accurate advice for human conduct can be found than the principles he gave for governing life, no more effective panacea for social ills has ever been prescribed than the Sermon on the Mount, and no more accurate road-book for happiness and contentment can be found than the principles Jesus taught his disciples.

Jesus not Understood.—Although the coming of the Messiah had been prophesied for centuries, he was not understood by his own people when he appeared. They had constructed in their own minds the kind of Deliverer they desired, and when Jesus did not come as an earthly king and immediately declare war against Rome, they rejected him, ridiculed him, falsely accused him, and finally crucified him. Even his own disciples failed to understand his mission, and were too weak of vision to see in him the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind. In modern days men continue in their efforts to fit him into their self-made plans, and expect him to perform his divine mission according to rules which they reserve the right to formulate. Christ will continue to be misunderstood, men will continue to suffer from their sin, and society will remain in the stench of its own wickedness, until by a spiritual discernment, people are able to see Jesus in his power and are willing to accept the guiding power and the controlling spirit which he brought into the world.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two incidents of the Bible story of Jesus which are most frequently questioned.
2. Name three conditions which existed at the time of the birth of Jesus that were favorable to his ministry.
3. Why did the Jews not recognize the Messiah in the person of Jesus?
4. Name one incident which, in a particular way, marked the human nature of Jesus and one that showed his divinity.
5. What quality of Jesus was probably most frequently manifested?
6. In what way does the prominence of Jesus in the common affairs of life show his divinity?
7. Name two distinct ways in which the Messiah's purpose is being accomplished in the world.
8. Is spiritual discernment possible for all people? How may it be acquired?
9. What is the function of the Christian Church relative to Jesus?
10. What motives should prompt individuals to secure a more thorough knowledge of the great Teacher?

LESSON 6

The Birth of Jesus

Text: Matthew 1, John 1, Luke 3.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. A habit is a coordination in the nervous system which prompts an individual to respond in the same manner under like circumstances.

2. Every habit which is developed prior to the age of twenty-five will transmit to the offspring a sensitiveness to influences which lead in the same direction. This may be called biological heredity.

3. Every individual, regardless of his biological heredity, will develop certain habits of thought and conduct because of his environment, education, and training. This constitutes his social heredity.

4. Everyone is individually responsible to God for his own conduct and is consequently held accountable therefor, regardless of his biological or social heredity. Fortunate is the man or woman who is well born.

The Ancestry of Jesus.—The ancestry of Jesus has been the source of much discussion and some disagreement on the part of Bible students. The genealogy, as found in Luke, begins with Jesus and extends back through the ages to Adam and finally to God. The record given by Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus. These two records do not harmonize in all particulars. However, the record given by Luke is probably the ancestry of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and that given by Matthew is evidently the ancestry of Joseph, Mary's husband. It is sufficient for

our purpose to know that Jesus was born of a woman and that he was able to suffer pain, endure insolence, and meet temptation with passions similar to those that try the souls of humankind. Jesus could not have become the Saviour of men without his human nature. It was necessary that he see bread in the stones of the wilderness, that he imagine the worship and adoration of the people as he stood on the pinnacle of the temple, and that he feel the power and influence of an earthly king as he viewed the kingdoms of the world from the mountain top. It was important that he be tempted in all points in order that he might sympathetically substitute himself as an atonement for the sins of the human race.

These elements of human nature not only entered the life of Jesus through his ancestry, but were probably cultivated by the society in which he lived for thirty years. According to the divine plan, it seemed wise that Mary, the mother of Jesus, should be reared in poverty and obscurity. Had she and her husband, Joseph, both of whom were direct descendents of the royal family of King David, belonged to families of wealth and influence, it is very probable that the ever suspicious and jealous King Herod would have been persistent in his efforts to destroy not only Jesus, the newborn King, but also Joseph and Mary.

The Mystery of His Birth.—The Record tells us that Mary, a virgin, was the mother of Jesus, and that she married a man whose name was Joseph. The possibility of a child being born of a virgin presents difficulties too mysterious for the intelligence of man. It should be remembered, however, that it is foolish and even ludicrous to believe nothing but what the human mind can understand and explain. If Jesus had been born like other men, he would have been a man like other men, and so much less a God. His miracuolus entrance into the world equals his miraculous departure from it, and both are in harmony with his matchless life. It is fitting that all humanity should bow in reverence before such a unique personality. Men of scholarship and business intelligence, who had seen Jesus and heard him talk, have given their testimony concerning his divinity.

Nicodemus, a shrewd Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, after he had closely observed the conduct of Jesus, said, "No one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

A crowd of people, having seen Jesus heal a small lad who had an unclean spirit, saw in him that which was divine. "And they were all astonished at the majesty of God."

The officers who were sent to intimidate and restrain Jesus, after listening to his words, returned to the chief priests and Pharisees who had sent them, with the excuse and remarkable testimony, "Never man so spake."

Even the soldiers who came to the garden to arrest him, men who were hardened to slaughter and accustomed to bloodshed, when they came into his divine presence "went backward, and fell to the ground."

When the evidence was all in and the witnesses heard, when envy and selfishness had over-ridden Pilate's verdict of innocence, when he was taken to the place called Golgotha and finally executed, the centurion who had assisted in nailing him to the cross and had watched him die, gave a forceful and final testimony which has been endorsed throughout the centuries, "Truly, this was the Son of God." In his birth, in his life, and in his death, Jesus was divine.

His Birth.—The date of Christ's birth was 4 B.C. Mary, a Jewish peasant girl, was his mother. No miracle has caused greater wonder than the entrance of the Son of God into the world. Matthew 1:18-25. The story told to Mary by the angel was no greater surprise to her than to her husband, Joseph. Jesus' birth, however, was not more miraculous than his eternal existence *from the beginning*. Both facts are worthy of divine power.

In compliance with the order of Caesar Augustus that all people should be registered in their ancestral home district, Joseph and Mary, who lived in Nazareth, a town of northern Palestine, returned to Bethlehem where the ancestors of both had lived.

Caesar's order for a census of the people had been made in order that he might have more accurate information for levying the Roman taxes which were ever increasing. Much excitement and irritation had come to the Jews because of this command, which was only another evidence of Roman domination.

With minds that were filled with a worried expectancy, Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem. The inn, or hotel, had already been filled by those who had also returned to Bethlehem in compliance with Caesar's order. Consequently,

the only available place which offered protection was a stable, or cave, which was provided for the oxen, camels, and horses. Such accommodations were frequently welcomed by the Oriental peasants as a place of protection for the night. Here Mary gave birth to her first born child. No hospital attendants, no beautifully prepared cradle, and no luxurious surroundings greeted the divine babe as he lay in the manger on the hay and fodder provided for the horses and oxen. Jesus did not belong to any group of high-browed egotists nor did he cultivate the show and pretense of an artificial aristocracy. Little wonder the common people heard him gladly.

The Shepherds and Angels.—Christ came into the world as a human being and also as the Saviour of the human race. His purpose was not primarily to preach but to establish a Church whose chief object has been the salvation of men. To accomplish this task it was essential that people should recognize him as the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets had prophesied throughout the ages. An angel came from heaven to announce his arrival. This angel, however, did not go to Jerusalem or to Rome, but to shepherds who were guarding their flocks.

Those whom God finds ready for tasks are generally those who, as men, are faithful to duties which have been committed to their care. The announcement of so great an event brought immediate action from the shepherds. At once they started for Bethlehem, where they were told they would find the Christ child.

The Wise Men.—In Persia were priests, scholars, scientists, and astronomers who studied the stars. These students of the heavens had come to believe that a new star was meant to announce the birth of a prophet, the coming of an Alexander the Great, or the death of a Caesar. They were quick to notice the new star which appeared when Christ was born. When angels sang and shepherds marveled, they did well to follow this beckoning star, which led them from the shore of the Caspian sea across the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to the cradle of the new-born King. Men continue to come from all lands and all nations to do reverence to the place where he was born. No personality has ever attracted men with such a persistent urge, nor has any individual ever brought such a quality of happiness and

contentment to the souls of those who follow his leadership, as Jesus of Nazareth.

QUESTIONS

1. The principle of heredity places what specific responsibility on every individual?
2. Name four prominent individuals in the genealogy of Jesus.
3. Why is belief in the virgin birth so difficult for some individuals?
4. Was Mary probably conscious of the fact that her babe was the divine Saviour?
5. State what seems to be the most remarkable testimony concerning Christ's divinity.
6. Does any particular importance attach to the fact that Jesus was born in a stable?
7. Was the interest of the wise men in the new star based on superstition?
8. Who was the Roman governor of Judaea when Jesus was born?

LESSON 7

The Silent Years

Text: Matthew 2: 19-23, Luke: 2: 21-52.

The Flight Into Egypt.—King Herod the Great, the Roman ruler of Judaea, had long been controlled by a suspicion that someone was planning to take the Kingdom from him. So suspicious had he become that he imagined his beautiful wife, the woman whom he loved, was plotting against him. To remove this fear he ordered her executed. Herod's mind had harbored sin and suspicion so long that even the lives of his own sons were not sacred. Blinded by an overpowering greed for power and the deadening effect of a jealous mind, he also gave his order for their execution. Few men have shown such brutal violence and have so recklessly trampled underfoot those finer qualities of soul which make lives happy and worth while, as this fiend and murderer. Little wonder is it that the Christ child, who was heralded as the new-born King, became the center of Herod's murderous interest. Urged on by the same mad jealousy which took from him his wife and his two sons, Herod ordered every male child in Bethlehem and the surrounding territory to be thrust through with the sword. By this slaughter he believed he would destroy the new-born King. The wailing cry of weeping mothers had no influence to stay his murderous hand. To escape this disaster, Joseph and Mary escaped to Egypt, and finally returned to Nazareth. Little did Herod think that the purpose of his wholesale murder would thus so easily be defeated. He had not learned that he fights a losing battle who fights against the living God.

Within a few months after his slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, Herod died, at the age of seventy years, of

a horrible and loathsome disease. He had reigned over the Jews for a period of thirty-seven years. In order that a universal wailing and lamentation might be assured at his death, he ordered the chief men of the country to report to Jericho, where he lay seriously ill. When they appeared, he ordered them imprisoned and commanded his sister, Salome, to have them executed on the day of his death. The command, however, was not obeyed and instead of lamentation there was great rejoicing in every Jewish home.

The Boyhood of Jesus.—Little is said in the Bible concerning the boyhood of Jesus. Many stories have been written concerning the wonderful feats he accomplished as a boy, and even concerning miracles he performed. All of these, without exception, are without authority and are consequently traditional stories merely, and not dependable as to fact. That Jesus had a human nature and yet was without sin, has been thoroughly established. It is therefore reasonable to believe that he attended the synagogue school with other Jewish boys, that he played games like other boys, and that he had the same troubles of childhood which have been common to all children since the world began.

Was he a leader of his group? Was he an athletic star? What was his deportment grade? Did he stand well in his class? Was he popular among his fellows? Answers to such questions would interest all students of his life. A complete and authentic story of his childhood experiences would add much of value to the literature of childhood. The record of this period of his life, however, must forever remain silent. It is sufficient to know that he was a boy among other boys, that he was a persistent student, that he was a faithful son, and that he thoroughly qualified himself for his work in life.

Jesus at the Age of Twelve.—The Jews desired to remember in some fitting manner their rescue from the destroying angel in Egypt. In recognition of this miraculous escape from death, they had established the Feast of the Passover. All Jews were expected to attend the celebration of this feast once each year at Jerusalem. When Jesus was twelve years of age, he accompanied his parents to Jerusalem on the occasion of this feast. Every Jewish boy, at the age of twelve, experienced a definite change in his habits of life. At this age he was expected to learn a trade,

and to seriously consider preparation for his life's work and for his own support. He became "a son of the law" and was given certain freedom from parental control which he had not previously experienced. It is not difficult to understand the feeling of joy and excitement which must have filled the soul of Jesus as he made his first journey to Jerusalem. Nothing, however, seemed to find for him a greater interest than the temple, which he called his Father's house. Here he probably explored its courts with wide-eyed wonder, and investigated all places that were open to him.

On the return journey, the parents of Jesus discovered, after three days, that their son was missing from the company. The habits of travel in ancient times, and the fact that Jewish boys at the age of twelve years were released in a large way from a rigid parental supervision, rendered his absence for three days easily possible without the knowledge or alarm of his parents. When his absence was discovered, his parents immediately returned to Jerusalem in search of him. It is easy to imagine with what utter disregard for their own weariness and hunger they hurriedly moved up and down the streets of Jerusalem with eyes that marked nothing but the features of their lost son. At last, in the temple they found him, interested and alert, listening to the words of the great teachers and occasionally asking questions. Fear for their lost son was suddenly changed to gladness, wonder, and astonishment, as they beheld him in a group of long-bearded and long-cloaked Jewish teachers.

When his mother had rescued him from his interest in a discussion of the Law and the Prophets, she probably drew him closely to her aching breast as she said, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." No mother ever listened to weightier words than came to Mary as her son replied, "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Immediately Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents, and the Record is silent concerning him for a period of eighteen years.

Obedience.—Jesus returned home with his parents and "was subject unto them." The honor and obedience he gave to his father and mother is a worthy example for any one to follow who would make the largest use of opportunities.

THE SILENT YEARS

The man whom the world finds ready for tasks is the man who, as a boy, was found by his parents ready for tasks. Confidence in the judgment of parents is rarely misplaced. Willingness to honor and obey those in rightful authority is the best insurance for growth and development. Little wonder is it that Jesus grew in favor with God and man as he grew in stature.

Jesus, the Carpenter.—One vocation is not so good as another in the building of character. Temptations in one kind of work do not readily appear in another. Jesus was a carpenter. He worked in his father's shop. As a peasant workman he understood the common people and was able to sympathize with the downtrodden. His work must have taught him that as rough lumber may be fashioned and made into articles of usefulness or structures of beauty, so may wretched harlots, greedy money-changers, and thieves be reconstructed and made fit citizens for the Kingdom of God.

The work of Jesus as a carpenter is a stern rebuke to those who labor under the gross misunderstanding that to engage in manual work is an index of inferiority and a reflection on their social standing. True aristocracy knows no standard but the standard of pure blood, strict integrity, and a disposition to serve mankind. True greatness requires that no opportunity for lightening burdens or encouraging the weak should be lightly passed over by anyone who would properly meet his responsibility to himself and his God.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Herod have any good reason to believe that someone was plotting to take his kingdom from him?
2. In what particular did Herod's sin in murdering the members of his own household differ from the common sins of humanity?
3. What was the probable reason for Herod's ordering all of the male children of Bethlehem, who were two years of age and under, destroyed, instead of directing the soldiers to search out the Christ child and kill him?
4. Does any information exist which suggests that Jesus showed his divinity in any definite way before his public ministry at the age of thirty?

5. What was the nature of the *frontlets* or *phylacteries* which Jewish boys began to wear at the age of twelve years, and what was their purpose?

6. Did the Jews in general know the origin and purpose of the Feast of the Passover which Joseph, Mary, and Jesus attended at Jerusalem?

7. Was the question Mary addressed to Jesus when she found him in the temple intended as a criticism of his conduct?

8. Was the answer Jesus made his mother miraculous in character?

9. Does the fact that one vocation furnishes greater temptations to sin than another suggest that the vocation in which the least temptation is evidenced should be selected?

10. Name one specific way in which an individual's vocation will determine, in a large way, his thoughts and actions.

LESSON 8

John the Baptist

Text: Luke 1:5-64, 3:1-20.

Zacharias Advised by Gabriel.—According to the Jewish law, the priests of each of the twenty-four orders were required to officiate at the temple service for one full week. When his turn came, the aged Zacharias, of the course of Abia, made his journey from Hebron, the city of the priests, to Jerusalem with feelings of sadness and discouragement. Sadness, because the Roman government had removed many of the ancient Jewish landmarks and had substituted Roman towers and fortresses. A hippodrome had been constructed for chariot races at the base of Mount Zion and an amphitheatre for gladiatorial combats had been located in the plain north of the city. Discouragement also came to the aged priest because he had little sympathy with the tithes of anise, mint, and cummin, and the long prayers of the hypocritical Pharisees whose interests were prominently located in their own personal importance, and who gave small attention to a sincere worship of the great Jehovah.

Had the spirit of David gone? Had the money-changers and sellers of doves completely usurped the house of prayer? Had God forgotten his promise made to Abraham, to Moses, and to Joshua? With such questions annoying his mind, Zacharias entered the temple for worship. It was his duty as priest to enter the holy place and to offer incense to God while the people without were at prayer. During the performance of this sacred duty, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and informed him that his aged wife, Elizabeth, of the daughters of Aaron, should soon produce a son who would be the herald and forerunner of the coming Messiah. This same angel, five hundred years before, had been sent to Dan-

iel and was soon to reveal the miraculous birth of Jesus to Mary. Zacharias was amazed by the announcement of such a miraculous event. Could it be possible that his aged wife should bear him a son? As a sign of the truthfulness of the startling information, the angel told Zacharias that he would be dumb and unable to speak until the promise had been fulfilled. In due time the child was born, and was named John by his mother. His birth preceded the birth of Jesus by six months.

Preparation of John.—The early life of John was lived in the wilderness of Judaea west of the Dead Sea. He was not the only man who became qualified for life's work in God's great university. The quality of his preparation and the character of his work enabled him to rank with Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. In the hurry and confusion of modern life it is difficult to see God, life, and duty, as John the Baptist saw on the wilderness hills of Judaea, or as Moses saw when he beheld the burning bush on the Mountain of God. To properly see the great values in life, it is sometimes necessary to be alone with ourselves and our Creator.

The religion of the Jews had degenerated into mere empty forms of Pharisaic hypocrisy. No spiritual intelligence or worshipful devotion proclaimed them to be God's chosen people and the special objects of his divine guidance and mercy. They had repeatedly ignored God and disobeyed his commandments, although they had not been without instruction and counsel. To adequately meet this spiritual condition, required a man who was prepared for the task.

The Personality of John.—Those qualities which, in a particular way, characterize an individual and enable him to influence his fellow men, may be called personality. John the Baptist could not live separate from his fellows and in close communion with God for a period of thirty years without developing a personality that attracted attention. His uncut hair, his long beard, his leather girdle, and his robe of camel's hair did not constitute his personality; they only made it more prominent. His piercing eye, his determined look, the sincerity of his motive, and his uncompromising character secured for him the attention of all who saw him.

His Message.—John was not primarily interested in whether or not his message pleased those who heard him. He did not adapt his words to the desires of the people, nor

did he take counsel of the wealthy and influential before he warned them of their sin. His service was not the monotonous mouthing of a ritual nor the mumbling of conventional creeds. John knew his people as he knew his God. His message was not new nor was it radical. It was the same message Isaiah had given to the Jews years before. John's sudden appearance on the banks of the Jordan river, his peculiar dress, and the directness of his message, drew great crowds to hear him. Not many men have used plainer words than John.

"Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

"He that cometh after me is mightier than I."

Baptism Instituted.—John instituted the rite of baptism. He intended that it should indicate repentance and a desire for divine forgiveness. It is used in modern days as a mark of cleansing from sin, of entrance into God's Kingdom, and of consecration to his service. It is also intended to encourage individuals to live lives of purity and obedience.

While John was preaching on the banks of the Jordan, Jesus, becoming aware that "his hour had come," appeared before the great preacher and offered himself for baptism. When John recognized Jesus, he hesitated to administer the rite, but finally consented. The date of the baptism of Jesus was probably near the close of A.D. 26.

Why should Jesus be baptized? Jesus was man as truly as he was God. He also went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, not because it was essential to the development of his divine spirit, but that he might satisfy the highest desires of his nature in meeting the full purpose of his incarnation. This example of Jesus should lead all Christian people to give thoughtful consideration to established religious ordinances. True it is, religious rites involve mechanical forms, but no human individual has ever yet attained to such spiritual excellence that he can worship God in spirit and in truth without the aid of some formal crutch to strengthen and support his weak spiritual efforts.

The Mission of John.—John the Baptist was the advance herald of Jesus and a preacher of repentance. He performed no miracles and taught no new philosophy. A number of disciples were associated with him in his work. These he taught certain religious lessons which involved prayer, baptism, and fasting. His mission was primarily to preach repentance and to announce the coming of Christ. "He seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me."

Character of John.—John the Baptist was a unique character. In personal appearance he was rugged. In the zone of the spirit he was humble, unselfish, faithful to his task, and devoted to his master. Not many men have had fewer faults. He had, by a long training in solitude, developed a quality of spirit, a conviction of purpose, and a standard of conduct which led him persistently in his work. This standard constituted his character.

The mind, like the body, grows from that on which it feeds. He who has tempered his life to bright lights and discordant sounds will be lonely among God's trees and the singing of birds. He who has developed the habit of honesty, can face the world without a blush and will be sensitive when conscience speaks. He who has deceived through long and studied effort and become accustomed to evade the law, will be restless even on a lonely road unless occasionally he can hide behind some bush or tree merely for the sake of being hid.

The individual is largely responsible for his own tastes, his own desires, and his own standard of happiness. Happy is that man or woman who uses the superior judgment of God's will to shape the program of life. From following such a program there will be no regret, no sorrow, and no disappointment.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by tithes of anise, mint, and cummin?
2. Name two advantages of solitude which come to an individual who is preparing for great tasks.

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3. Name two distinct values of religious ordinances.
4. Compare and contrast in at least one particular John the Baptist and Elijah.
5. What was the predominant motive which stimulated John the Baptist in his work?
6. Why should the people repent?
7. Is baptism essential for salvation?
8. Name two specific reasons for attending religious services.
9. What determines happiness? Was John the Baptist happy?
10. How may the success or failure of any life be measured?

LESSON 9

The Temptation of Jesus

Text: Matthew 4: 11; Mark, 1: 10-13; Luke 4: 1-13.

The Nature of Temptation.—A temptation is an enticement or allurements, especially to evil influences. Temptations are subtle suggestions which tend to lead an individual to do what is already in his mind. The man who is a thief will see temptations to steal regardless of the road on which he travels.

“Our outward act is prompted from within,
And from the sinner’s mind proceeds the sin.”

“It is one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall.”

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him.”

His work Begins.—When Jesus was baptized and had come up out of the water, he probably for the first time obtained a clear vision and a definite realization of his mission on the earth. He then knew he was the Messiah sent from God. The Spirit of God descended upon him and consecrated him in full measure for his task. The Father’s voice, “Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased,” marked him with divine approval.

Jesus was at this time thirty years of age, the age at which the Jews were permitted to begin public duty of a religious character.

Great Problems to Solve.—It is difficult for any human individual to understand the thoughts which must have filled the mind of Jesus as he faced the future. This difficulty may be explained by our inability to properly estimate the

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human nature of Jesus. He was a man as well as God. The fact that he was a man with passions and desires which are common to humankind must have caused many serious questions to flash through his mind.

Will my close relationship with the Father remain perfect, and thereby guarantee the successful completion of the great task he has given me to perform?

Will the religion I am about to teach and the Church I came to establish, be able to break through the hypocritical formalism of the Jews?

How can I lead the people to believe that I am the Messiah and their Deliverer?

Such questions probably brought great agony of soul to Jesus as he was moved to go into the wilderness. It was necessary that he be alone with his thoughts and that he commune with his Father. Mark indicates the stress that rested on the mind of Jesus when he says, "The Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness."

It was necessary, also, that Jesus should experience temptation in order that he might keep his human nature in harmony with his divine spirit. Occasions of temptation, trial, and suffering only polish virtue and display the quality and fibre of life. The virtue of an individual and the strength of his character deserve no commendation until they have been tried. Temptation is the fire that brings the dross of life to the surface.

"It is no sin to be tempted, but to be overcome."

The three temptations of Jesus were peculiarly adapted to strike at the three important factors in human life. Physical desires, an egotistic presumption and desire for applause, and the love of power and influence, were the storm centers of his temptations.

Hunger.—Few influences are more powerful than a desire to preserve our own lives. Hunger will cause wild animals to forget their cunning and will drive them even into inhabited districts to obtain their food. Men will lose their judgment and risk their lives before they will die from thirst. Jesus was in the wilderness forty days. He was hungry. The desire to secure food was prominent in his mind. The stones which lay on the ground in this wilderness district, both in color and shape, suggested the cakes which were commonly baked in the Jewish home. Their

appearance excited his desire for food. Jesus was as conscious of his divinity as of his human nature. He knew he could instantly use his divine power in transforming these stones into bread and thus satisfy his gnawing hunger. He also knew he was facing sin. Herein lay the temptation. Jesus was quick to recognize it. He was sensitive to the heinousness of a sin that would secure lawful things by the use of unlawful means. He could not violate the standard erected in his own soul which forbade him to prostitute his divine power for the gratification of physical desires. Well did he know that man cannot live by bread alone. Some things in life are important and some things are secondary.

Jesus was able to trust his Father for all his needs. He therefore met the temptation fortified by his own righteous convictions and a keen conception of his Father's will. (Deuteronomy 8:3.)

This temptation came to Jesus as an appeal to desires which were not evil in themselves but which have become the occasion of sin. To be hungry and desire food is not sinful, but to allow such a mental and physical condition to submerge our faith, violate our conscience, and thereby prompt us to do unlawful things, is to sin.

"Temptations hurt not, though they have access;
Satan o'ercomes none but by willingness."

Presumption.—Probably no thought had so completely filled the mind of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry as the difficulty of convincing the people among whom he had lived since childhood, that he was the Messiah. If he were to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple and not suffer therefrom, the people would probably recognize him as a god. Could he presume to use his divine power and to trust his Father's protecting care in such a rash act, simply to convince the skeptic Jews that he was the Deliverer sent from God?

Such thoughts must have come to Jesus with tempting force, but they had no power over him who was without sin. The quotation from Psalms 91:11, used by the devil on this occasion, is a prominent example of how it is possible for any individual to find a half-excuse for doing anything he wants to do. He may even quote the Bible as his authority in a desperate desire to quiet his conscience and stimulate

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his courage. It was not sinful for Jesus to trust his father or to place confidence in God's power to protect him from harm. To presume to use that power, however, to gratify a selfish desire, was to sin. God's miraculous power is not available for the performance of tasks which can be accomplished by his own servants. Joshua depended on God for results, but he did not omit to use his clearest judgment, his best efforts, and his most enthusiastic energy. Nehemiah made his prayer to God, but he also "set a watch against them day and night." David came to Goliath in the name of the living God, but he did not forget to take with him a sling and a few stones. These men trusted God and were not disappointed.

Power.—It was essential that Jesus should know men as they were. It was necessary that he know the pain and struggle of every temptation if he was to go among men who were tempted and ensnared by sin, and bring to them the offer of sympathy and forgiveness. Jesus was capable of all feelings and experiences which are common to humanity with the one exception of sin. Probably nothing has greater tempting power for any individual than the offer of wealth, power, and influence. These were offered to Jesus on the condition that he violate his own standard of righteousness by prostituting himself before the sinful shrine of an ambitious greed. By securing the kingdoms of the world, Jesus could have governed them according to his will. The people might have thus learned of his divinity. His people, the people selected and chosen by God himself, might have recognized him as the Messiah. All of these things and more were offered him in exchange for his soul. The offer is still open to any individual who, Judas-like, is willing to betray his Master, trample underfoot his own conscience, and sell his character for a few pieces of silver. To those who persist in learning their lessons by experience, let it be said that the question, "What are you willing to give me?" (Matthew 26:15) is soon followed by the heart-rending confession, "I have sinned." (Matthew 27:4.)

"There is no man who is so rudely punished as he that is subject to the whip of his own repentance."

It is not to be supposed that these three temptations were the only ones Jesus was required to face. The Record tells

us that the devil departed from him "for a season." The spiritual and mental conditions of all individuals render it more difficult to successfully meet temptation at one time than another.

"There are moments in the lives of even the strongest men when they dare not meet the devil."

QUESTIONS

1. What is temptation?
2. Is a moral or religious standard in the mind of an individual necessary before temptation is possible?
3. What was meant by Seneca when he said, "It is opportunity that makes the thief"?
4. Name two effective safeguards against yielding to the temptations of sin.
5. Did the temptations of Jesus make an appeal to his human nature, his divine nature, or to both?
6. Why are some individuals able to recognize some temptations more quickly than others?
7. Why does not a certain sin tempt all individuals to the same degree?
8. Can all temptations be avoided?
9. Is it possible to successfully meet all temptations?
10. Name two specific results which come from yielding to temptation.



LESSON 10

The First Year of Christ's Ministry—I

Text: John 1: 35-51, 2, 3: 1-21.

The Purpose of His Ministry.—Before the birth of Jesus, the Jews did not agree concerning the purpose of the coming Messiah, nor concerning the character of his mission. Many believed he would be a great political genius, some thought he would be a great prophet and leader, similar to the ancient judges of Israel, and some had no definite conception of his work. All, however, had a vague notion that he would be a deliverer who would free them from their oppression and restore them to national power. People continue to differ concerning the purpose of his mission on the earth.

What was the purpose of his incarnation? Was it to make converts? Peter secured more converts on the Day of Pentecost.

Was it to restore the Jews to national life and influence? The Jews continue to be scattered over the entire earth and have neither returned to their homeland, nor to political power.

Was it to deliver them from the political control of Rome? He did not free them from Roman domination.

What was his mission?

When the work of his ministry is carefully analyzed and his own testimony concerning it allowed its full force, it will be discovered that the purpose of the incarnation of the Son of God involved the following features:

1. To provide a plan which, if accepted in sincerity of faith, would free the souls of believers from eternal death.

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2. To present a religion in harmony with the Plan of Redemption.

3. To establish a Church whose chief function would be to develop faith in believers, teach the Christian religion, and train for Christian service.

Jesus, by his life and teaching, emphasized the importance of that quality of character which would honor God and command the respect of men. These principles he explained to his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount, and in many public and private discourses. A conscience void of offence, a contentment of soul, and a sympathetic service were characteristic marks of the life he brought into the world as an example for those who were willing to follow him. "For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This type of life must be experienced to be appreciated.

How was he to accomplish his purpose?

To this question it may be replied that five methods were used by him:

1. By his unique and masterful teaching of a reasonable religion.

2. By the example of a perfect life.

3. By his miraculous power.

4. By his sacrificial death.

5. By his resurrection.

John's Unselfishness.—Jesus returned from his wilderness experience with the strength of spirit which comes from a sense of victory. No happiness or contentment of soul is quite equal to the consciousness of having fought a good fight and, at the same time, having kept the faith. John was still preaching at the Jordan River. As soon as he recognized Jesus, he unselfishly called the attention of his disciples to the new Leader, exclaiming, "Behold, the Lamb of God." It is not common for a man to submerge his own popularity by calling public attention to one who has greater ability and is more worthy. Only great men can do it.

His First Disciples.—Andrew and John turned from John the Baptist and followed Jesus. It is difficult to imagine what thoughts engaged the interest of these two men as they talked with Jesus from ten o'clock in the morning until the twilight hour. The purpose of his ministry must

have occupied first place in their conversation. People generally talk about that which most vitally concerns them and in which they are most interested. John found his brother James, and Andrew found his brother Simon, who was later called Peter. These they brought to Jesus. Andrew never became prominent in his discipleship, but Peter, James, and John later qualified to stand with their Master on the sacred Mount of Transfiguration. On the following day, Jesus added Philip to the little group of disciples as he started on his way to Galilee. Philip, like John and Andrew, found a friend whom he invited to join the company. This man's name was Nathaniel, also known as Bartholomew. To the argument that he could not see how anything good could come out of Nazareth, Philip told him to come and see. A close view of Jesus, however, brought from his doubting soul the confession, "Thou art the Son of God." Acquaintance with God and obedience to his law continues to be the only road which leads to the truth.

It is not surprising that Nathaniel should entertain doubts concerning the fact that Jesus was the Messiah. He lived at Cana, a town seven miles north of Nazareth, and a prophet's honor is small in his home community, especially among residents of a rival town.

The First Miracle.—Three days after Nathaniel had testified to the divinity of Jesus, he returned to his home town of Cana with Jesus and the other disciples. The occasion of this visit was a marriage feast to which they had been invited. It is significant that the first public meeting which Jesus attended was a marriage feast, and that his first miracle was performed for the glory of God and the happiness of his friends. After the feast had been in progress several days, the mother of Jesus, being also present, suggested to her son the embarrassment which was about to come to the bridegroom on account of the shortage of wine. Jesus, in his most tactful and gracious manner, bade the servants fill with water the vessels or firkins which were generally used for ceremonial purposes. The capacity of each vessel was about nine gallons. This was done and the vessels were carried to the master of the feast, who was greatly surprised to find the quality of wine superior to any that had been served. The best wine was generally served at the beginning of the feast.

This miracle served a large purpose at the beginning of Christ's ministry. It not only confirmed the faith of his disciples, showed forth the glory of God, demonstrated his willingness to contribute to the happiness of his friends, but it proved his ability to renew life and vitalize faith.

Capernaum.—From Cana, Jesus went to Capernaum in company with his mother and his disciples. This town occupied a place of considerable importance among the Jews. It was located on the northwestern coast of the Lake of Galilee and was frequently visited by Jesus during his ministry. Against this same town he later prophesied judgment. (Matthew 11:23.)

The First Passover.—Jesus, being an orthodox Jew, desired to join in celebrating the Passover, which was near at hand. He, therefore, remained but a few days in Capernaum and then went to Jerusalem. From the day Jesus, as a mere lad of twelve years, talked with the great teachers in his Father's house, the temple had been to him most significant and sacred. A heart-breaking scene now greeted him as he entered the temple for the first time during the period of his public ministry. Truly, his Father's house which had been a "house of prayer" had become "a den of thieves."

It is not surprising that the soul of Jesus was filled with righteous anger as he beheld the greed, the sacrilegious formalism, and the hypocritical piety of the officiating Jews. To trample underfoot the teachings of the prophets and to ignore those spiritual virtues which gave Abraham his faith, Jeremiah his loyalty, and David his courage, were sin enough, but to deliberately profane God's holy temple and to wantonly violate its sanctity, left small claim for Jesus' mercy. The shallow pretenses of the priests and the temple officers, as they looked pious and seemed religious, was but a thin veneer to smother the stench of their own decaying souls.

Cleansing the Temple.—Shops had been established in the temple for the sale of victims for the sacrifice, and for the exchanging of foreign money into the sacred shekels with which alone religious offerings must be made. This privilege had been grossly abused and the temple had become a marketplace for greedy and unscrupulous speculators. Commercialism had crowded out the spirit of consecration and devotion. Reverence had gone.

Reformation, however, was about to begin. Making a scourge of rushes, on which probably the cattle had been feeding, Jesus drove the cattle and the cattle-like Jews from the temple, overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and even commanded those who sold doves to the poor to depart. Whence came such power and authority to any man? For our answer it is only necessary to remember the divinity that compelled Moses to cover his face on Mount Sinai, the personality that caused the soldiers at the Garden of Gethsemane to go back and fall to the earth, and the look that drove Peter from the judgment hall and brought from his eyes burning tears and from his bitter soul a sincere repentance.

"Take these things hence," said Jesus, "make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." No words ever struck with greater force. Few commands have ever been so quickly obeyed.

When the confusion had subsided and a show of courage had returned, the Jews asked, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Jesus, referring to his own body, said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." A mingled feeling of wonder and hatred filled the minds of the resentful Jews; wonder because they felt he had a power they could not explain, and hatred because they considered his actions an insult to their official authority and a blight on their reputation as leaders and teachers of the people.

Although Jesus had taken no uncertain position in his effort to show that reverence and holiness belonged to the house of God, and that the religion of the Jews greatly needed purification of spirit and purpose, yet he did not consider conditions in Jerusalem favorable for the immediate continuation of his work.

Nicodemus.—Some of the Jews, who had dependable religious convictions and superior intelligence, believed the words which Jesus spoke and were interested in his miracles. Among these was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a man of mature years, a man of wealth, a teacher of prominence, and a member of the Sanhedrin. He was a respected leader among the Jews, his reputation was above criticism, his knowledge of the law was accepted as authority, and his influence was coveted by rival Pharisees.

Whether from a purely intellectual interest or from spiritual motives, Nicodemus desired to learn more from the new Teacher and Prophet. Timidly he came to Jesus by night. Jesus received this distinguished guest, not with cringing flattery nor with a bid for his influence or leadership, but with a courteous frankness which only the Master could manifest.

The first statement made to the young Galilean by this prudent miracle-seeker was probably weighted with more meaning than he knew. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." To his polite salutation, Jesus replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The startling reply that Jesus made and in which he stated in condensed form the basic principle of the Christian religion, brought from the legal and technical mind of Nicodemus the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" To this Jesus answered, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Still Nicodemus did not understand. His thoughts were narrowed, confined, and limited by dogmatism, creed, and formalism. His mind was not open to the truth. He was as cautious in his thoughts and expressions as he was in his visit. He was interested in the words of Jesus but he would not accept his religious teaching. He respected Jesus but he would not follow him.

Few interviews of Jesus were more instructive or more thoroughly given to the discussion of vital truth than this conversation with Nicodemus. Few men have had a better opportunity to secure God's mind than this scholarly and influential, but bigoted, night-visitor. The interview was closed with advice that should have been suggestive to Nicodemus. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works shall be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God."

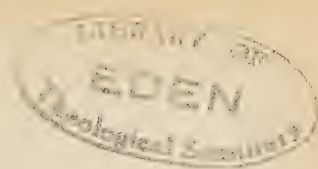
Later Nicodemus made a weak attempt to defend Jesus from the Pharisees by saying, "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth"? Probably controlled by a fear of criticism and a desire to retain his coveted position of popularity and influence, he never again raised his voice for Jesus either in praise or

defense. Even during the trial of Jesus before Caiaphas, Nicodemus remained silent. The trial over, the verdict rendered, the sentence pronounced, and Jesus dead, Nicodemus again appeared with myrrh and aloes to embalm his body. His spineless, half-way soul was at last willing to show slight devotion. The opportunity to show loyalty to Jesus and fidelity to his leadership had gone. Many lukewarm spirits have followed his example in wasting the hour of their opportunity. Friendship, sympathy, and love have a larger place in human need than wreaths of flowers in the house of mourning.

Nicodemus was capable of better things.

QUESTIONS

1. What was probably the most important purpose of the incarnation?
2. Has this purpose been clearly understood in modern days?
3. Name two specific results that have demonstrated the value of Jesus' teaching.
4. What motive can prompt anyone to be unselfish?
5. Name two probable causes for the interest manifested in Jesus by Andrew and John.
6. Does the fact that Andrew did not become prominent as a disciple reflect on his spiritual qualities?
7. How is it possible to get a close view of Jesus, or to become intimately acquainted with his will?
8. What was probably the predominant effect of Christ's miracle at Cana on those who saw it?
9. Does any formalism of worship in modern days correspond to the formalism of the ancient Jews?
10. Account for the promptness with which the Jews vacated the temple when commanded to do so by Jesus.
11. What condition in the life of Nicodemus kept him outside the group of Christ's disciples?
12. Contrast John the Baptist and Nicodemus in at least two particulars.



LESSON 11

The First Year of Christ's Ministry—II

Text: John 3:22-36, 4.

Jesus in Judaea.—After the Passover, Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem but remained in Judaea for a period of probably eight months. The ordinance of baptism was administered by the disciples of Jesus and by John the Baptist as a mark of discipleship to all who accepted their teaching. The name of Christ was not used in administering the ordinance until the close of Jesus' ministry. The fact that the disciples of Jesus baptized more disciples than John, led the envious Pharisees to become suspicious of the growing popularity of Jesus. This hostile feeling later prompted him to leave Judaea for Galilee: not that he was afraid of any opposition, but his good judgment and prudence suggested that an open break with the ruling sect of the Jews would operate seriously against the work he planned to do. How long he was in Judaea and where he went is not recorded.

John's disciples, in loyalty to their leader, were also irritated because of the growing reputation and success of Jesus. Their report to John of this feeling of jealousy gave him another opportunity to show the greatness of his soul by proclaiming his own inferiority, when compared with him who came from heaven.

John's Imprisonment.—King Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great and a Samaritan woman, Malthace by name, had been a traitor to his brothers, unfaithful to his wife, and treacherous with his people. While on a journey to Rome, he persuaded Herodias, who was both his niece and

his sister-in-law, to abandon her husband, Philip, and, with her daughter Salome, to follow him. Such a violation of domestic honesty and decency was sufficient to arouse the fiery prophet, who reproved him in no uncertain words for his heinous sin. John, like Daniel, Elijah, and Jeremiah, was no respecter of persons. He did not secure his convictions from *men of wealth and influence*, nor did he temper his conduct with fear or bribes. Little wonder is it that, with a frankness and honesty that would have done credit to the prophet Nathan as he stood in the presence of King David, John the Baptist censured King Herod for his vice and lust.

Herod, in retaliation for what he considered a personal offense and an insult to his official position, placed John in prison. What had angered Herod had more forcibly irritated the adulteress, Herodias. She waited for an opportunity to show her vindictive spirit and her murderous hand. He who meditates evil will soon find an occasion with its overpowering temptation. So it was with Herodias. At the celebration of the king's birthday, the dancing of Salome, her daughter, so inflamed the lustful mind of Herod that he rashly promised anything she might ask. Prompted by her bloodthirsty mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist on a golden tray. Herod found that the gate of crime was easier to open than to close. Consistent with his promise, however, he ordered her wish granted. Thus John the Baptist died, but his spirit continued to live, not only in the lives of his disciples, but in the conscience of his murderer. Many sleepless nights were waiting for Herod.

"Oh, that word Regret,
There have been nights and morns
When we have sighed,
Let us alone Regret!
But it is patient and it wakes,
It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep."

Jesus in Samaria.—While John was in prison, Jesus left Judaea and started for Galilee. Between Judaea and Galilee was Samaria, where a hated and mongrel race of people had lived since the captivity of the Kingdom of Israel by Assyria. Jewish hatred for this people had so thoroughly been aroused that, instead of going from Judaea to Galilee through

Samaria, many of the Jews detoured and made the journey on the east side of the Jordan River. Jesus, however, passed through Samaria. Class hatred and race prejudice continue to afflict the minds of a large group of individuals who are unable, even in modern days, to free themselves from traditional prejudices and banish from their minds an intense selfishness.

The Samaritan Woman.—Traveling northward from Judaea, Jesus and his disciples reached Jacob's well, which was located near Sychar at the foot of Mount Gerizim. This well, about seventy-five feet deep, had been dug by Jacob and was located on land purchased by him from the children of Hamor centuries before the birth of Christ (Genesis 33:19). While Jesus tarried at this well and the disciples went to buy food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water.

Many striking features marked the interview between Jesus and this sordid woman. She was one of the hated Samaritans: Jesus was a Jew. She was sinful in character: Jesus was without sin. She believed that religion was largely a matter of time and place: Jesus believed that religion involved a spiritual devotion and a life in harmony with the truth. The place had been made significant by many sacred memories. Jesus, in his conversation with this woman, made the first declaration concerning his identity as the Messiah. This interview violated the rigid social conventionalities of the Jews, but it indicated a world-wide mission for Christianity. She was much surprised that Jesus, being a Jew, should even speak to her. She was more surprised that he should expect kindness from her by asking for a drink of water.

Jesus very soon showed her that he had that to give which would bring greater satisfaction and a larger blessing than water to a weary and thirsty traveler. It was necessary, however, that Jesus should first uncover for her her life of sin before she could understand the message he meant to give. Sin in the life of anyone will blur his vision to see God. He that would serve the Master and secure the happiness that comes from following him must first put away his sin. Her own conception of religion was reconstructed when she learned for the first time that true religion is a condition of the soul and a quality of thought, that God is a spirit that operates in human life, and that worship requires a sincere devotion and a consecration of purpose.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ); when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he."

The personality and teaching of Jesus so impressed the woman that she hastened to her friends and said, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?" Her enthusiasm, and the power of Jesus' teaching, led many of the Samaritans to believe on him.

In the presence of such teaching, it is difficult to understand why forms, places, and times continue to constitute in the minds and conduct of some Christians the primary and most essential elements of the Christian religion. True it is that, *forms* and *ordinances* are important factors in developing a spiritual life, that *places*, such as the church and the family altar, are vital to the safety and progress of the work of the church, and that *times*, such as the evening prayer and the Sabbath day, are important in the lives of faithful Christians, yet the spiritual motive in all of these is that which gives them value. "For as he thinketh within himself, so is he." This interview of Jesus with the Samaritan woman ranks in importance with his interview with Nicodemus, in that both present the fundamental facts of the Christian religion. These may be summarized as follows:

With Nicodemus,

1. The necessity of regeneration.
2. Man cannot understand all of the mysteries of God.
3. Belief in Christ necessary for salvation.
4. The gift of God's Son to redeem mankind, that through him and his sacrifice any believer may be saved.
5. Obedience to God will lead to light and truth.

With the Samaritan Woman,

1. The true life of an individual depends on his willingness to be controlled by God's spirit and will.
2. Sin must be eliminated from the life before spiritual values can be secured or appreciated.
3. True worship involves an intelligent attitude toward God and a devotional consecration of spirit.

THE FIRST YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY—II

4. Knowledge of God should be given to those who know him not.
5. God is merciful and recognizes no class or caste.

Jesus in Galilee.—From Sychar, Jesus and his disciples went to Galilee. Here he took up the message of John the Baptist. "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." The popularity of Jesus had remarkably increased. Many of those in Galilee had been at the Passover and had seen his miracles and the authority with which he cleansed the temple. News traveled rapidly in Galilee, which was a small province about twice the area of the state of Rhode Island. Many followed him and were enthusiastic concerning him, probably not on account of his teaching but because of the miracles he performed. No individual could do what Jesus had done and long escape public attention. He was no common man.

The Nobleman's Son Healed.—At Cana he was approached by a steward of Herod, who conceived in his mind the belief that this great healer could cure his son who was seriously ill at Capernaum. "The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my son die. Jesus saith unto him, go thy way; thy son liveth." The nobleman believed the presence of Jesus at Capernaum was necessary if his son lived. He learned, however, that his boy was healed at the moment Jesus spoke the words of healing power. This limited, narrow, but sincere faith in Jesus and his miracles later grew into a saving faith in his power to heal both body and soul.

Jesus at Nazareth.—Jesus, like all human folks, no doubt longed to return to his home town of Nazareth, where he had spent the happy days of his childhood. Although he knew that a prophet was without honor in his own country, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. In the Jewish synagogue it was the custom for anyone who desired to read the Scripture and to take any special part in the service, to stand up. After the Scripture was read, some comment on it was generally made by the reader. The popularity of Jesus quickly secured for him the privilege of reading. The Scripture read by Jesus on this occasion was Isaiah 61:1. When he had finished reading he sat down. The comments he made concerning what he had read were astounding to those who heard him.

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

The wonder that filled their minds was that a young man, and one from their own town, had developed such remarkable ability as Jesus had shown by his interpretation of Isaiah's prophetic words. Their wonder was only surpassed by anger, which came to them from the startling statement which he dared to make. "Today hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Could it be possible that one of their own number, a carpenter, and one whom they had known since childhood, would expect them to believe him to be the Messiah and the Deliverer sent from heaven? They were drawn to him by the magnetism of his personality, they were amazed at his wisdom, but they could not accept him as the Christ.

Aroused to frenzy by what they blindly considered blasphemous words, they cast him out of their city and "led him unto the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way." Saul-like, in their willfulness, these weak followers of the faith, self-imposed judges of divinity, did not know their puny strength was pitted against omnipotence. Fools, since the time of these Galileans, have attempted to fight against the living God.

Henceforth, Jesus made his home in Capernaum. The fact that Capernaum was a center of activity and that it was near the homes of many of the disciples, probably prompted him to select it as a center from which his work, covering a period of probably 18 months, would be done. Here he taught the people and performed many miracles. His work, so far, had been done in a manner least calculated to arouse strife among the Jewish sects. Friction was avoided that he might most successfully present himself as the promised Messiah.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the predominant impression which Jesus left in Jerusalem when he departed from the city after the Pass-over?
2. What caused the jealousy of John's disciples? Were they to be censured therefor?
3. Was John to be criticized for the lack of diplomacy

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shown by him in reproving Herod for his conduct with Herodias?

4. Name two other women in Bible history who were important factors for evil in their own homes.

5. Could John's untimely death be considered an indication of failure on his part?

6. In what did Herod's crime in killing John principally consist?

7. For what was Mount Gerizim noted?

8. Explain how sin dims our vision of Christ.

9. What did Jesus mean when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again?

10. What motives probably prompted Jesus to heal the nobleman's son?

11. Name two features of religion which the Jews at Nazareth considered essential. What was their greatest mistake as they rejected Jesus' explanation of Isaiah 61: 1?

12. Name four places which were made particularly significant by the presence of Jesus.

LESSON 12

Characteristics of Jesus

A Leader.—The world has seen a few great leaders. Moses, Alexander the Great, and Lincoln have commanded the admiration of the world. None, however, can be classified with the Nazarene.

Moses, a man commissioned by God, led more than a million ignorant and undisciplined Hebrews from Egypt across the Red Sea into Asia, and governed them without epidemic or revolution for a period of forty years.

Alexander the Great, by his own personal and selfish ambition, conquered the world.

Lincoln, controlled by a desire for justice in human relationships, freed the bodies and spirits of more than four million slaves.

Jesus, the son of God, came into a world which was already under the condemnation of sin, and by his divine wisdom, compelling personality, and matchless teaching, presented a program of life which guarantees the highest quality of happiness and contentment in this world, and by his sacrificial death he established a plan of redemption which offers eternal life in the world to come. His leadership did not end with his death but, revitalized by his resurrection, it has grown with increasing power through the ages.

His Popularity.—At the close of the first year of the ministry of Jesus, people everywhere began to talk about him and gather around him. They had seen his miracles, they had witnessed his fiery anger as he cleansed the temple, they had listened to his words, and they had felt his magnetic power. He was named in all groups of society. Men talked of him at their work, on ships, and wherever people were found together, his name was prominent in their con-

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versation. People came from all parts of the country to hear him. So great was his popularity that crowds of people trampled upon each other in order that they might see his miracles or hear him speak. As he traveled from one place to another, people gathered along roadsides and even climbed trees that they might catch a glimpse of this matchless leader and teacher.

His Miracles.—Probably the greatest interest of the people was focused on his miraculous power. Soon after his first miracle in Cana of Galilee the news of the great wonder-worker spread like fire throughout the entire country. Little wonder is it that, in disease-stricken Palestine, the entire population seemed to be moving toward him when they learned he could cure leprosy, open the eyes of the blind, feed the hungry, and even raise the dead. The streets and highways were congested with the diseased and their persistent friends. So pressed was he by the crowds and with such pity did he look upon their needs, that time for eating his food was frequently denied him. His power to heal seemed to the people all the more wonderful because he used no medicine in his work and many times wrought cures when the afflicted were separated from him by great distances. Attempts have been made to scientifically explain the miracles of Jesus. A powerful mental influence of one individual over another may seem to explain the cure of fever or the removal of a demon from a troubled mind, but psychology cannot give power to feed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, change water into wine, or walk on the Lake of Galilee.

His Apostles.—Jesus probably had two purposes to serve by selecting his disciples. He needed assistants in the great work of his ministry. He needed a select group to whom he could present the principles of the Church he came into the world to establish, and on whom he could depend to continue his work.

His disciples, with possibly the exception of John and Peter, were men of ordinary ability. The immediate result would probably have been much greater had he selected men of special training and greater ability. It is impossible to even imagine what his disciples could have done if each of them had been men with the scholarship and training of a Paul or a Moses. It is evident that Jesus intended to show

that even the most ordinary of individuals may become successful and faithful servants. Three years were used in training his disciples. During the first year they continued their regular employment but were frequently with him to receive instruction. When he began his work in Galilee he asked them to forsake their regular vocations that they might be with him continually. Later he advanced them to the third stage of training by ordaining them as apostles, giving them miraculous power, and sending them forth to teach and to heal.

One of the most significant facts of the ministry of Jesus, and one of the strongest arguments for the Christian religion, is that he was able to take men of meager ability, men of worldly minds, and even men of earthly desires, and in three years transform their lives, correct their standards of morality, and give their thoughts a spiritual control which enabled them to revolutionize the religious thinking of the world. The same power continues to be available for all who will submit to his teaching and leadership.

Jesus, the Teacher.—"Never man so spake." Some men have been interested in the miracles of Jesus. Some have been attracted by his personality, but all have marveled at his teaching. He ranks as the master teacher of the ages, not only in the principles he taught, but also in his method of presentation. Scholarly Pharisees and learned lawyers made repeated attempts to catch him in his words. In every instance, without one single exception, they were astounded at his faultless thinking and wisdom.

Six prominent characteristics mark his teaching.

1. His use of illustrations. All great teachers use illustrations that are accurately adapted to the subject being presented. The parable was the most common form of illustration used by Jesus. Instead of presenting a discourse on the weakness of immature judgment and a father's willingness to forgive, he told the story of the Prodigal Son.

2. His use of figures of speech. Jesus did not use abstract analyses of the Kingdom of God and the virtue of Christian service. He used mental pictures of seed falling on stony ground, a woman hunting for a lost coin, and golden grain ready for the harvest.

3. His authority. It is refreshing to be taught by anyone

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who knows. Throughout history, men of known learning and ability have wearied their hearers by references to the words and writings of the world's scholars. The scribes and Pharisees busied themselves with endless and varied interpretations of the law. Many modern teachers rely on their study of books for their information and inspiration, and even feel a lack of power when removed from the textbook during the teaching process. Jesus taught with authority. His efforts were not focused on what Moses wrote or the scribes taught, but on those spiritual values of mind and soul which stimulate right motives and encourage correct conduct.

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but *I say unto you*, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."

4. His patience. Not all teachers are patient. No one ever came to Jesus with a sincere desire to learn, who did not receive his sympathy and feel his kindly manner. The wicked Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Sychar, a woman who had little learning and less in her character to merit confidence, received the same patient consideration which he showed when Nicodemus, a scholarly aristocrat of unquestioned reputation, came to him for information and instruction.

5. His personality. One individual is not as fit as another to stand before others as teacher. One face is not as good as another to inspire confidence and command respect. One personality is not as good as another in the building of character. There are some, however, whose presence alone in any group is sufficient to inspire action or to pacify the mob. The personality of Jesus was not commonplace. The people heard him gladly because they were drawn to him by the magnetism of his personality. Even little children were happy as he took them in his arms. Dependence on him who can inspire the confidence of a little child is rarely misplaced. He was not weak and effeminate in appearance, as many pictures suggest, nor was he essentially different in his physical parts from his disciples. When, lone-handed, he cleansed the temple of those who were violating its honor, the offenders immediately rushed from his presence. In like manner also, the soldiers who came to

the garden of Gethsemane to arrest him, when they came into his presence, were repulsed by the power and purity of his personality.

6. His text. The Kingdom of God was the text around which Jesus centered all of his teaching. This Kingdom was not to be a political organism with geographic boundaries, a standing army, and a financial policy. It was not to be a reconstructed national state for which the Jews had been hoping since their captivity. It was not to be a tangible and visible thing such as the devil showed Jesus on the mountain top. It was a condition of soul in which purity, honesty, righteousness, and truth were its distinguishing marks. It was a kind of life whose chiefest joy is found in bringing honor to God and happiness to men. It was a character sufficiently rugged to meet temptations in the strength of God, and a spirit something like that which Jesus taught should control life. "For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." "The Kingdom of God is within you."

His Human Nature.—Jesus was a man as well as God. His human qualities were normal and similar to those of common folks. He wept with his friends in their sadness. He was angry when his Father's house was dishonored. He was joyful at the feast of Cana. He was sympathetic when the people in his audience were hungry. He was tempted in every particular as other men, yet without sin.

He Had an Aim in Life.—No one can reach a destination unless he knows where he is going and moves toward his goal. The pupil in school who selects the "snap" courses will likely hunt the line of least resistance in life's activities. The boy or girl who stands at the head of his class at the beginning of the course will likely be there at the close.

"A noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed."

The purpose of Jesus was enforced by a controlling desire to carry out his Father's will. This desire gave him power to go to Jerusalem and to the tragic death which he knew awaited him. Neither social interests, temporary luxury, nor worldly honor was able to lure him from the mis-

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sion of his life. His work was primary; all other things were secondary. It is not essential in the life of any individual that wealth be secured, honor achieved, or pleasures enjoyed: it is imperative, however, that a definite purpose shall control life and that we shall keep faith with ourselves and God.

His Sinlessness.—Jesus is the only individual who has lived on the earth without sin. What is sin? Sin is failure to meet God's standard for life. This standard was clearly explained by Jesus as he taught his disciples. It has been said that no individual ever contributed much to the sum of existing good in the world who did not make mistakes. This is probably true if Jesus is excluded. *He* made no mistakes. If all of the forces which operate in human life are carefully estimated, it will probably be found that a man who makes mistakes is better than he who does nothing. Even Jesus taught that the luke-warm half-way man had no place either in the society of men or in the Kingdom of God. The test of life cannot be met by a negative confession. Repentance, confession, and an endeavor after a new obedience is the antidote for sin. It is difficult, however, to secure forgiveness for duty unperformed. Jesus was no negative character. His mind, his desires, and his purpose were so thoroughly in harmony with the will of his Father that obedience required no effort. Consequently, repentance and confession had no place in his life.

One praiseworthy quality of all great men has been their willingness to repent and turn from their sins. Even David, the man of God, confessed that he had sinned.

Jesus was not only sinless, but his life was so accurately adjusted to the divine will that even appearances of evil registered a discord in his sensitive soul. Some people, although in the presence of discords, cannot recognize them.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two important and specific qualities of an efficient leader.
2. What is meant by popularity? Is it an indication of merit?
3. Are miracles performed in modern days?

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4. Distinguish between a disciple and an apostle.
5. What feature of the teaching of Jesus seemed most effective?
6. Name two differences between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the Pharisees.
7. Name two specific instances in which the human nature of Jesus showed prominently.
8. Is a purposeful life void of fun, pleasure, and amusement?
9. Name four characteristics of a life such as would harmonize with the standard which Jesus taught his disciples.
10. What essential steps must be taken by the individual who would become a disciple of Jesus?

LESSON 13

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—I

Text: Mark 1:21-34, Matthew 8:14-17, Luke 4:31-41.

Dates Uncertain.—It is impossible to determine the exact time when the first year of the work of Jesus ended and the second year began. The first period of his ministry is called the Year of Obscurity for the reason that very little of what Jesus did during this year is recorded. The second period was the Year of his Popularity, when men crowded together from all parts of the country to see him and hear him speak. The third period was the Year of Opposition, during which many lost their enthusiasm, followed him no more, and began to look for opportunities to criticize. People generally find that for which they look.

It should be remembered, however, that no one should criticize another until he has done more in his own sphere of activity than the one criticized has done in his. An evil mind is capable of seeing evil even where it does not exist. Jealousy will often interpret sin where there is no guilt.

Galilee.—Galilee was the most northern of the four provinces of Palestine. Its surface is made rugged by a few jagged peaks and by an elevated plateau which gently slopes on the eastern side to the valley of the Jordan River. This section of Palestine in the time of Jesus was very fertile and produced a variety of grain and an abundance of fruit. In the valley of the Jordan River were the famous groves of fig and olive trees. Also located in this tropical valley is the Lake of Galilee, thirteen miles long, six miles

broad, and more than 600 feet below the surface of the Mediterranean Sea. Probably no place in Palestine occupied a more prominent place in the interest of the people than the region of this beautiful lake. Its shores were bordered with towns where lived the people who cultivated the fertile valley and fished in its sparkling waters. More than 3,000 boats were used by fishermen on this lake. The hot springs of Tiberius, probably of volcanic origin, which once had such a weird influence on the ancient Jews, continues to send forth its steaming water and has made the place popular for its baths.

In addition to local interests, Galilee was the cross-roads for travelers between Egypt and Babylon, and between Europe and Asia. This fact not only gave the Jews intercourse with other nations, but rendered them subject to attack from foreigners who coveted their fertile country.

The entire province of Galilee was, in the time of Jesus, thickly populated. Many villages and towns dotted its surface, the most important of which, in the experiences of Jesus, were Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Ramah, Cana, Nain, and Magdala.

Disciples Called.—When Jesus had transferred his headquarters from Nazareth to Capernaum he immediately began his plans for active work. He had been heralded in certain districts as a great leader, yet he refrained from revealing himself in any prominent degree lest an uprising against the Roman government might operate seriously against his work. As he walked on the beach of Lake Galilee, he saw Andrew and Peter, his brother, fishing in the lake. Within a short distance he saw in another boat the brothers, James and John, with their father, Zebedee. These four had accepted his leadership in Judaea during the preceding year and on several occasions had been with him and had been instructed by his teaching. Jesus now advanced them to full-time discipleship when he said, "Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men." This was their second and more definite call for service. In response to this appeal they "straightway" left their work and followed him. To these men was given the choice between a service for the Master with its opportunities for spiritual development and the business of fishing, which merely sup-

plied sufficient money for food and clothing. They were asked to choose between lifting thousands of human lives from superstition, sin, and darkness, and catching fish, selling them, and mending their nets. They chose and they chose wisely. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he happens to possess. No man ever lived solely for himself and came to the end of life with a contented soul. Solomon, after a life of luxury, pleasure, amusement, and worldly honor, said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." The rich man who had gathered together a great fortune and was making his plans to pull down his barns and build greater ones, was not only surprised but startled when God said unto him, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee."

The Crowd.—The fame of Jesus had begun to attract a great multitude of people. When they learned he was on the beach by the Lake of Galilee, a great crowd gathered that they might either hear him teach or see some wonderful miracle which he might perform. Either to avoid the crowd which was pressing hard upon him or to secure a better position from which he might address the people, he placed himself in one of the boats and asked his disciples to push the boat a short distance from the shore. From this advantageous point Jesus taught a great audience of attentive listeners. What he said to them has not been recorded. He probably, however, did not omit to emphasize the fact, which he stressed both with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, that to worship God acceptably it is essential for the worshiper to have a consecrated motive and a sincere faith. The fact that he was teaching them from a boat instead of in the synagogue or temple, served to enforce his teaching that forms, times, and places are not so important as the kind of life and the quality of thought. God may be worshiped on the Lake of Galilee, at Jacob's well, or in the temple at Jerusalem. He may be worshiped at a camp meeting or in a cathedral.

Simon's Faith Challenged.—When Jesus had finished his teaching, he advised his disciples to move farther out on the lake and to let down their nets. To this Simon, a man

of experience in the fishing business, replied, "Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing; but at thy word I will let down the nets." Simon probably wondered how Jesus, a young man reared in Nazareth and far removed from the fishing grounds of Palestine, could tell him, an experienced fisherman, anything about catching fish. He may have had doubts in his mind concerning the judgment of Jesus, but he obeyed. Saul, the first king of Israel, was compelled to learn by grievous experience many years before, that obedience is better than sacrifice. Others continue to learn the same lesson and by the same expensive route.

The result that came from Simon's efforts was astounding not only to Simon and Andrew, but to James and John, who were partners with him in the fishing trade. This result was but an index of what Jesus would be able to do as a leader of men. Simon was not able to bring fish to his net but he could obey Jesus and place the net in the water. Effort is under the control of the individual. The results of effort are under the control of Divinity.

Jesus at Church.—On the Sabbath following his experiences on the Lake of Galilee, Jesus went to the synagogue. Is it necessary to attend church in order to be a sincere Christian? Jesus, from his example, would have answered in the affirmative. Jesus did not need to learn nor did he need to repent or confess, yet he went to church. The habit of regularly placing oneself in the proper environment to see the heinousness of sin more clearly and to estimate the value of purity and righteousness more accurately, has a meaning of no small significance even to the best of humankind.

The synagogue service among the Jews more nearly resembled a workers' conference in modern days than a formal church service. In consequence of this, Jesus shared in the teaching part of the service. He did not come to church to listen merely, much less to criticize. He came to worship. It is well for everyone to remember that he should enter the house of God with reverence and be critical only with himself.

The teaching of Jesus aroused a keen interest on the part of all who heard him. "They were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority." It is little wonder they were astonished. The teaching of the scribes had de-

generated into a dry and technical analysis of the law and the repetition of tedious quotations from religious authorities. Religion for them was a theological interpretation of the laws of Moses with the spirit and original intent of the law omitted. A few religious leaders, even in modern days, magnify the importance of ritualistic doctrine and dogmatic creed, and sacrifice or eliminate the vitality of spirit and the consecration of motive. The teaching of Jesus came to the starving souls of these Jews with reviving power. He did not condemn the orthodox interpretation of the law, but he supplied the life and spirit which alone give value to any law, creed, or doctrine.

During the service, a great stir was made and the people thrown into great confusion by a man who was possessed with a demon suddenly crying out in the meeting, "Ah! what have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, The Holy One of God." Immediately Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and said, "Hold thy peace, and come out of him." They who were astonished at his teaching were amazed when he demonstrated his power and authority, even over unclean spirits. "And there went forth a rumor concerning him into every place of the region round about."

Jesus in Simon's Home.—Jesus and his four disciples went from the synagogue to the home of Simon, whose mother-in-law was ill. With the same kindly sympathy shown in the synagogue to the man possessed with a demon, Jesus so thoroughly and so quickly cured her of her affliction, that "immediately she rose up and ministered unto them." No man ever received Jesus into his home without obtaining a blessing. It was well that Simon knew Jesus. It was better for him and his family that he invited the Master into his home. Every home will be brighter and a better place in which to live when it is under the guidance and blessing of him who is the source of good.

The Twilight Hour.—In the minds of those who recognize God and his law, a peculiarly sacred atmosphere seems to pervade the evening hours of the Sabbath day. None could possibly realize this fact to a greater degree than Jesus and his disciples. They had attended church, they had been in Simon's home, Jesus had again shown his tender sympathy. As the shadows of the day approached they saw

the most remarkable demonstration of a needy world and the power of Jesus to heal and save. The entire city of Capernaum seemed to be moving toward Simon's house. The streets became congested with those who were diseased in body and afflicted in mind. Many who probably had given up all hope of ever being restored to health, hastened to the street on which Simon lived, either by their own efforts or assisted by friends, that they might come under the influence and healing touch of Jesus, the great Physician. They were not disappointed. No one ever came to Jesus with a sincere motive and a trusting faith who did not receive a larger blessing than that for which he asked. Truly, he demonstrated to these wretched and needy sufferers of Capernaum his power and willingness to take all infirmities and to bear all diseases.

QUESTIONS

1. Briefly account for the popularity of Jesus changing, in one year, to bitter opposition.
2. Are individuals in modern days called for service in any manner similar to that in which Jesus called his first four disciples?
3. Why should a prominent public revelation of the identity of Jesus stimulate a revolution against the Roman government?
4. (a) What was the motive which prompted the disciples of Jesus to follow him?
(b) Does the same motive continue to operate in the minds of men?
5. Why do not all men recognize, as Solomon did at the close of life, that to obey the commandments of God from a right motive is the whole duty of man?
6. What was probably the greatest error which Jesus discovered in the minds of people, and which he found necessary to correct?
7. How is it possible for an individual to be certain that he is obeying God's will?
8. Does the change from the long church service in the days of the last century, to the comparatively short service

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of modern days, indicate a degeneration in the spiritual life of the Church?

9. (a) Why should Jesus need to worship?

(b) What benefit does any individual obtain from religious worship?

10. Does the miraculous power of Jesus over disease furnish any argument for the belief of some that all diseases of the body may be cured by faith and prayer?

LESSON 14

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—II

Text: Mark 1: 35-45, 2: 1-14.

Retirement.—After a busy Sabbath day, Jesus departed early the following morning to a solitary place and there prayed. The human nature of Jesus needed rest and spiritual communion with his Father. A time for solitary thought is imperative in the life of every individual if he is to maintain a symmetrical development and face his problems with the best energy of his powers. Every life will become dull to the finer appreciations of the mind and spirit if it continuously blunts its edge against the hurry, confusion, and strife of a busy world. It is during these solitary moments that the mental and spiritual processes become accurately adjusted. It is during periods of meditation that the soul brings to itself those elements of power which enable it to project great deeds and surmount the obstacles that block the pathway to success. If Jesus was to face successfully the great tasks which lay before him, he must revive his spirit by direct contact with the source of all power. If he was to continue his work as the divine Son of God in human form, he must keep his human nature in tune with divinity. To do these things he must occasionally retire to a solitary place and pray. No better formula can be prescribed for the solution of life's problems. Prayer is the greatest source of power for the human soul.

His Missionary Spirit.—With a feeling of partial responsibility for their Master's work, the disciples followed Jesus to his lonely retreat and told him that crowds of people were trying to find him. The human nature of Jesus was

probably again tempted to listen to this call of popularity as he heard the applause of the multitude and realized his influence. His program, however, included more than Capernaum. He had demonstrated his power by healing many among them that were afflicted. He had given them his message. It was necessary that he should teach others concerning the Kingdom of God. No better missionary program can be found than the example here established by Jesus. Many in Capernaum had probably not seen him or heard his voice. In order that the Kingdom might be uniformly established and the Church supplied with a plan for service, he said, "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." The disciples, although they probably did not understand the full force of his reply, followed him as he "went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons."

The Leper Cleansed.—No type of disease is more loathsome, more repulsive, or brings greater physical and mental suffering to its victim and is more suggestive of sin, than leprosy. A man afflicted with this dread disease and who had heard of the healing power of the Great Physician, came to Jesus and by a reverent and pathetic appeal begged Jesus to cure him. In keeping with the Master's sympathetic spirit, Jesus replied, "I will; be thou made clean." It was necessary, according to the Jewish law, that anyone afflicted with such a contagious disease as leprosy should secure a certificate of health from the priest as soon as he had recovered from his ailment. Jesus advised the man cured of leprosy to see the priest and thus obey the law. So careful was Jesus that his work might not be hindered by a public uprising of the Jews or by their attention becoming focused on his miraculous power rather than on the message he desired to give, he requested the man not to publish the fact that Jesus had cured him.

What Jesus did for this poor wretched leper, he is ready to do for any whose life is gradually being decomposed by the ravages of sin. Leprosy can only kill the body. Sin is not only able to kill the body but will destroy the soul. The Great Physician's prescription for a permanent cure is *repentance, confession, and obedience*. His office is never closed, no one is excluded, and no one is asked to wait.

Suspicious of the Pharisees.—Jesus again returned to Capernaum. Again the crowd followed him. This popularity of the new Teacher could not easily be ignored by the scribes and Pharisees, who claimed to be the final authority on all matters touching the law or religion. These egotistic teachers of the people, these Doctors of Divinity, these self-imposed judges between right and wrong, could not rid themselves of envy and jealousy as they learned what Jesus was doing. So long as Jesus was content to talk to a few fishermen by the Lake of Galilee, these high-browed religious aristocrats considered him unworthy of serious consideration. When, however, the multitude began to follow him, when the streets began to be congested with crowds that sought to hear his vital words and to see his marvelous works, and when some were heard to call him the Messiah, they could not ignore him if they were to maintain their position of authority among the people. In consequence of this biting envy, they began to carefully analyze his teaching and to seek opportunity to criticize and entrap him in his words.

A Strange Cure.—While Jesus was teaching in the home of a friend in Capernaum, four men, carrying one who was paralyzed, sought to bring him into the presence of Jesus that he might be cured, but were unable to do so on account of the crowd. As a last resort, these persistent friends of the palsied man climbed to the roof and removed a portion of the thatched covering. Through the opening thus made, they let their unfortunate friend down at the feet of the great Healer. Jesus, seeing their faith and being fully aware that he was in the presence of his ecclesiastical critics, said to the human wreck that lay before him, "Son, thy sins are forgiven. Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

No statement could more thoroughly have confirmed the suspicions in the minds of the scribes and Pharisees that Jesus was teaching a false religion. Blinded to the true character of Jesus by a desire to find a half-excuse for protecting their own position of influence and authority, they asked, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" In the warped minds of these bigoted church leaders, no belief could have any virtue unless it was in perfect harmony with their own traditional

convictions and self-interpreted doctrines. No one is so mentally dull or spiritually blind as he who, with studied effort, prevents light from entering his soul by nursing the prejudices of his own narrow mind. In every age and in every community a few of such men appear. They have different names and different beliefs, but their personalities are the same. They have become so intimately identified with traditional customs and beliefs that any change is sacrilege, and any new thought is blasphemy. Little wonder is it that the people influenced and taught for generations by the musty minds of these scribes and Pharisees, should be so refreshed by a brief experience in the presence of Jesus as to exclaim, "We have seen strange things today."

The Pharisees should not have changed any sincere convictions they may have had without first testing them in the light of truth and religious progress. They should have accepted new doctrines only after they had measured the spiritual values of their beliefs.

Matthew.—Very soon after the Pharisees had branded Jesus as a blasphemer, he was walking on the shore of Lake Galilee near the great highway which connects Damascus, Capernaum, and the Phœnician seaports. Here, he saw Levi, or Matthew, a hated employee of the Roman government, whose business was to collect the taxes from the reluctant Jews. No position in Galilee was more offensive than that of tax collector. No man in Palestine was more despised than he who would assist the Roman government in its oppressive taxation.

"And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll; and he saith unto him, Follow me, and he arose and followed him." His immediate response was probably the result of what he had heard concerning Jesus. Decisions such as Matthew made are not frequently reached in a moment of time. Great resolves, like great deeds, are generally the product of thought and development. The decision of Matthew led him from the lowly position of sitting by the roadside collecting a few coins for a hated government to the honorable work of writing the biography of the Son of God.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two specific values which come from occasional periods of solitude.
2. What is meant by a missionary spirit?
3. Give a probable reason for the apparent absence of miracles in modern days.
4. Name two probable motives which prompted the Pharisees to become antagonistic to Jesus.
5. What was the most essential element in the religion of the Pharisees?
6. Is sin always the cause of disease?
7. What is blasphemy? Is it a common sin in modern days?
8. Wherein was the greatest sin of the Pharisees?

LESSON 15

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—III

Text: John 5; Mark 3: 14-19; Luke 6: 13-16.

IMPORTANT FACTS

1. The Feast of the Passover was the first of the three great annual festivals and was celebrated from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day of the month Nisan. It commemorated the protection of the Children of Israel from the destroying angel in Egypt.

2. The Feast of Purim was an annual festival to commemorate the preservation of the Jews from the cruel edict of Xerxes, King of Persia. This edict was instigated by Haman and nullified by Esther.

3. The Herodians were a sect of Jews who accepted the rule of the Herods as the most satisfactory compromise between the Jewish faith and heathen domination. They endorsed Roman rule by supporting Herod the Great, Herod Agrippa, and Herod Antipas. They interpreted Jesus as a rival of their king.

4. It should be remembered that three charges were brought against Jesus when he was finally brought to trial.

The Bethesda Fountain.—On the north-east corner of Jerusalem, near the sheep gate (now St. Stephen's Gate) was a pool, or fountain, surrounded by colonnades or porches. This pool was an intermittent mineral spring whose waters periodically moved. In these colonnades were to be

found many who suffered from various ailments. A weird superstition caused these suffering people to believe that their diseases would be cured if only they could place themselves in the pool when its waters moved.

Jesus at Jerusalem.—After teaching throughout all Galilee, Jesus again attended a feast at Jerusalem. It is probable this feast was the Feast of the Passover, although some believe it was the Feast of Purim. As Jesus came by the pool of Bethesda his interest was at once attracted to a miserable sufferer who had been diseased for thirty-eight years. "Wouldst thou be made whole?" said Jesus. The crippled invalid replied, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." The sympathetic and miraculous power of Jesus was instantly available for help. "Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk."

Jesus Criticized.—Jesus had healed the man and had commanded him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. To carry a burden on the sacred day was a heinous sin in the opinion of the Jewish leaders. They were not sufficiently rational or sufficiently spiritual to properly interpret a good deed. The law of the Sabbath day was to the Pharisees not a matter of necessity and mercy but a matter of pounds and distance.

So soon as the man was discovered carrying his bed, the Pharisees, with seemingly no thought of thanksgiving for his recovery, placed themselves on the trail of him who had effected the cure. Having later learned from the healed man that Jesus had both cured him and commanded him to take up his bed and walk, they converged their criticism and persecution on Jesus.

Jesus Addresses the Pharisees.—The first charge the Pharisees had brought against Jesus was that of blasphemy. The second charge was his breaking the Sabbath day. To these Pharisees, Jesus made a most forceful reply in which he emphasized the following facts in terms so plain they could not easily be misunderstood.

1. He said God was his father.
2. He had divine power to heal. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will."

3. The Father had given all judgment unto him.
4. All should honor him as they honor the Father.
5. All who believed his teaching would have eternal life.
6. Moses accused them. "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me."
7. There would be a final resurrection and judgment.
8. He convicted them of fatal unbelief.

Such words thoroughly irritated the scribes and Pharisees. Here was a man who said he was the Son of God, that all judgment was given unto him, that belief in him was essential to eternal life, and that he should receive the same honor as that given to God himself. By no formula could these prejudiced Jewish leaders interpret these words in any other way than as a gross form of blasphemy. This predominant conclusion was made all the more irritating by the fact that the people were coming from all parts of the country to hear him and many believed in him. After some discussion among themselves, and probably after careful deliberation, they decided that if their positions of honor, influence, and authority were to remain secure against the attacks of the teaching of Jesus, and if the people were to be protected against this impostor, it would be necessary to kill Jesus and thereby stop his rapidly growing influence.

Persecution Continued.—Jesus was not to be intimidated or turned from his purpose by the threats of the bigoted, envious, and thoroughly aroused Jewish leaders. The readiness with which Jesus shattered the rigid, technical, and ludicrous requirements of the law in the interests of intelligent devotion and consecrated living, continued to stimulate the anger and hostility of the Jews.

As he returned from Jerusalem to Galilee his disciples ate some of the grain of a certain field through which they traveled. Although the taking of such grain for food was permitted (Deuteronomy 23:25), the Jews considered it as sin, if done on the Sabbath day. It was probably interpreted as threshing.

The Withered Hand.—The attitude of the Pharisees was shown in a similar fashion when Jesus went into the synagogue at Capernaum and healed the man with a "withered hand." Such an act on the Sabbath day was a violation of the Jewish law unless it were necessary to save life. That

the Pharisees would criticize this act of Jesus was expected because they were looking for opportunities to find fault with him. The Pharisees, anticipating that Jesus would heal the man with the palsied hand, asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" In reply Jesus made clear to them not only that it was an unfortunate law, which prohibited anyone from doing good on the Sabbath day, but that he was even lord of the Sabbath. Confused by his frank statement of embarrassing facts, they joined forces with the Herodians that their combined forces might more quickly put an end to the man whom they could not easily convict.

Jesus, knowing their plans, retired again to the shore of Lake Galilee, and the multitude followed him.

Twelve Disciples Chosen.—Criticism of the work and teaching of Jesus was growing more rabid. Although the crowd continued to follow him, yet their conception of his mission and purpose was very shallow. Many of them were prompted by no higher motive than that of curiosity. The combination of the forces of the Pharisees with those of the Herodians indicated a persistent opposition and antagonism which would cease only when Jesus was destroyed.

Many disciples had become particularly interested in his work and teaching. His fame had not been limited to Galilee and Judaea, but had extended to Tyre, Sidon, Peraea, and many other neighboring provinces.

Jesus, being conscious of growing opposition and being aware of the full purpose of his ministry, withdrew into the mountain and continued the entire night in prayer to God. After these sacred hours in the mountain, Jesus was again joined by a number of those who had been most faithful in following him and most interested in his words. From this number he selected twelve in order that he might have opportunity to train a select group who would be capable of continuing his work when death should end his efforts. Five of these had previously been his disciples. None of these men were trained scholars, and almost all of them were very poor. No group of men, however, was ever commissioned for a greater service. Their work was to establish a Church, change civilizations, and save souls. These men may be characterized as follows:

1. Simon (Peter) was a *fisherman* originally from Bethsaida and later from Capernaum.

2. James, the son of Zebedee, was a *fisherman* from Capernaum.

3. John, the brother of James, was the *youngest* of the twelve and was called the *beloved* disciple. To John, Jesus committed his sorrowing mother.

4. Andrew, the *brother* of Simon Peter.

5. Philip was a *peasant* from Bethsaida.

6. Bartholomew (Nathaniel) was from Cana of Galilee.

7. Matthew (Levi) was a *tax collector* at Capernaum.

8. Thomas, the *doubter*, was probably born in Antioch, Syria, but later became a Galilean.

9. James, the son of Alphaeus, is generally accepted to be the *brother* of Jesus.

10. Thaddeus was also called Lebbaeus and Judas.

11. Simon, the Canaanite, was a member of the party called *Zealots*. The two essential principles of this party were that they advocated obedience to the Mosaic law and refused to pay taxes to the Roman government.

12. Judas Iscariot, the *traitor*, was the only one of the Apostolic band of twelve who was *not a Galilean*.

QUESTIONS

1. What sect opposed the Herodians in their loyalty to the Roman government?

2. What is the principal cause of superstition?

3. Did the waters of the pool of Bethesda have any virtue in healing disease?

4. What constitutes a violation of the Sabbath day?

5. Could any evil possibly come from such an act as carrying a bed on the Sabbath day?

6. Why did not the Pharisees show the same sensitiveness to other forms of evil as they showed toward any violation of law governing the Sabbath?

7. Which of the eight facts emphasized by Jesus in his address to the Pharisees probably irritated them most?

8. Were the Pharisees sincere in their antagonism against Jesus?

9. Name the plausible reasons for the Pharisees joining forces with the Herodians in their attack on Jesus.

10. Between what two conflicting desires were the twelve apostles placed when they became conscious of the serious antagonism of the Pharisees?

LESSON 16

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—IV

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE BEATITUDES

Text: Matthew 5.

Conference of Jesus and Disciples.—After Jesus had selected his twelve disciples, he brought them together to a mountainous elevation back of Capernaum in order that he might place definitely before them the foundation principles on which his kingdom was to be established. The place selected was admirably suited for such a conference. On one side was the calm and beautiful Lake of Galilee, and on the other was Mount Carmel, where Elijah had demonstrated the power of God, had tested the virtue of his own faith, and had startled, terrified, and then put to death the priests of Baal.

The Need of the Disciples.—The disciples of Jesus had been in his companionship and had listened to his words of instruction, but they had no definite conception of his plan, nor had they any intelligent understanding of the principles which were to control their efforts in the work he had called them to do. They were Jews, and, like many in modern days, were hampered in their spiritual development by the emphasis they had placed on ceremonial forms and the traditional teaching of their ancestors. The religion which Jesus came into the world to teach, and which he was anxious his disciples should understand, involved right motives, a devotional spirit, a superior quality of life, and a consecrated service. Church ordinances, ceremonial rites, and

religious forms were to continue, but they were to be considered of secondary importance, and valuable only as they contributed to those spiritual and ethical values which make life in this world a blessing, and life eternal secure. The crowd followed Jesus and listened to the matchless sermon he preached to his disciples.

The Poor in Spirit.—Probably no individual in human society, or in the Church, ranks lower in the scale of human excellence and spiritual worth, when measured by God's standards, than the man who does not know and is unwilling to admit his own ignorance and imperfections. The poor in spirit are those who are conscious of their sin, know their need, and are anxious to improve their condition. The Pharisees did not belong to this class. Like some modern individuals, who give nothing to the Church but their money, they used their self-estimated worth to coerce and influence the Church and its workers. Concerning such egotistic dictators, Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Concerning those who knew their need, who were anxious to secure guidance and counsel, and who were willing to admit their poverty, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To such people only can the kingdom of God come. God does not enter any life as an unwelcome guest. To those who receive him, accept the principles of his kingdom, and follow his guidance, a blessedness is promised which will not only insure happiness of spirit and contentment of soul in this world, but a joyful immortality in the world to come.

Those Who Mourn.—

"Into every life some rain must fall:
Some days must be dark and dreary."

There would be no light if darkness were impossible. It is sometimes necessary to be hungry in order to enjoy the food we eat. Health is never properly valued until illness comes. Those who have the highest appreciation of good music are those who are hurt most by discords.

"The stamp of rank in nature is capacity for pain,
And the anguish of the singer makes the sweetness of the strain."

Every individual consciously or unconsciously erects in his own soul a standard by which he measures his joys and sorrows, and by which he determines his choices. The dependability of such a standard depends on his willingness to keep his mind open to the truth, his desire to make use of available opportunities to obtain the truth, the accuracy with which he applies the truth to his own life, and his unwillingness to violate the standard thus established. His own evil tendencies and the sins of others will tend to mutilate and destroy any standard or life creed he may erect. Temptations will blur his vision, selfish ambition will stifle his conscience, and questionable pleasure will cause him to hunt for half-excuses. In the variegated experiences of life, every individual will consequently meet with sadness, sorrow, and possibly remorse.

To him, however, who is able to consider the standard he has erected in his own soul too sacred to violate, and if, even through bitter adversity and hardship, he can

“Force his brain and nerve and sinew
To serve his turn, long after they are gone,
And so hold on, when there is nothing left within him
Except the will, which says to them,
Hold on!”

and who, when fortified by the power of the Holy Spirit, is able to keep his hands clean and heart pure; to such a man Jesus said, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”

The Meek.—“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” There are some individuals in modern civilization who believe the meek could not come into the possession of anything except by inheritance. When Jesus spoke of the earth, he did not mean stocks and bonds, acres, houses, and hogs. He had reference to the kingdom of God which not only operates during the pin-point of time covered by human lives on the earth, but whose jurisdiction and power continue throughout eternity. Compared with such a kingdom, every earthly power is weak and trivial.

Such a statement at such a time must have seemed idle talk when the power of Rome meant the strength of its army, and when the efficiency of its leadership was measured by a desire to coerce and slaughter.

The philosophy of life, as Jesus interpreted it to his disciples, has not even yet been fully appreciated. The Christian religion, however, has demonstrated to the world that the silent forces of education, peace, and spiritual growth, are more effective in the lives of individuals and in the progress of nations than any militaristic program or the barbarous and forceful policy of a savage people. The man of greatest power and the man to be most feared by all violators of law is not the man who talks most and speaks loudest, but the man of steady features and conservative thought, and who has, by his Moses-like meekness of soul, brought his life into harmony with the divine will concerning sin and righteousness.

Desire for Righteousness.—No more significant statement is found in this peerless sermon than the promise made by Jesus to those who desire to know God's will. Jesus had taught Nicodemus that if any man would know the truth he must be willing to obey God's commandments and measure his life by God's law. Jesus' advice to the lawyer who came to him in search of the greatest commandment was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This was the Master's direction for him who would understand righteousness. Separated and removed from such principles was the dogmatic teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. Formal religion, diluted with hypocrisy and tainted with bigotry, cannot be accepted as service in the Kingdom of God. A sincere desire and an earnest purpose to follow God's leadership must constitute the motives of him to whom God can reveal his will. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

The Merciful.—Mercy is the highest type of justice. Mercy is that quality of conduct shown by one toward another which is not determined by the letter of the law, but by what will be best for the other man. Jesus said to the convicted woman, when the evidence of guilt was conclusive, "Go and sin no more." The same Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple with a severity and dispatch that would have done credit to a Caesar or a Napoleon.

Any offense may be met in one of three ways:

THE SECOND YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY—IV

1. The injury may be endured. "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

2. The injury may be ignored and forgotten. "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord."

3. The injury may become the basis for action and the doer adequately punished. "Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; and set not thy heart on his destruction."

The one offended, however, must determine his conduct in all such instances, not by his own desire, but by the benefit his actions will bring to the offender. The time of the longest claw and the sharpest tooth has given place to intelligence, justice, and mercy.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses."

The Pure in Heart.—Few people are able to see the good where both good and bad appear. That which a man sees is colored by the condition of his own mind and soul. If he thinks evil thoughts, he will see sin. If he thinks pure thoughts, he will see goodness. In every community there are some who are able to see "books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." There are also those whose scavenger minds find no greater satisfaction than hunting the offal of tottering reputations. Fortunate is that individual who reads such books and associates with such companions as will enable him to keep his mind clean and his vision clear.

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

The Peacemakers.—The peacemaker is not a negative character. It is he who, with a true conception of the peace which Jesus taught, locates the cause of discord, envy, hatred, and war and then courageously attempts to remove it. With a true appreciation of the higher values in life, he encourages education, morality, and religion. With an equally accurate estimate of evil influences, he condemns avarice, jealousy, and greed. He is not a tepid pacifist who avoids struggles, but he is a rugged soldier in his efforts to destroy the forces that oppose peace. He is a constructive

citizen who uplifts society, and a mailed warrior in his antagonism against the forces of sin. No greater blessing can be secured from any endeavor than Jesus promised to those whose lives were used in the interests of peace.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God."

The Persecuted.—Forces of evil do not willingly submit to defeat. No man ever developed strength of character without a struggle against forces that tended to pull him down. The protected oak is not so rugged as the one that has weathered the storms of a century. The finest gold has passed through fire, and the most brilliant diamond is the one that has been ground and polished most. Truly, "the night brings out the stars" in the realm of life as in the sky of heaven. Jesus warned his disciples that their pathway would not be strewn with roses. He told them they would suffer affliction, be persecuted, reproached, stoned, and possibly killed. In addition to all these things, and not least of all, he told them that men would say all manner of evil against them falsely for his sake. He also told them that, in the presence of all this suffering, they should not only maintain their faith and courage, but they should rejoice and be exceeding glad.

No great and conscientious teacher of the truth has ever been able to avoid the cutting criticism and the biting thrusts of the forces of evil. Every prophet has been ridiculed, every fearless preacher of the truth has been insulted, and every upright and courageous leader in every community has been slandered. It is not easy to face such a seething world of vipers and retain an equanimity of mind and a strength of purpose such as Jesus endorsed. All men will fail in such a struggle unless their lives are kept in vital communication with the God of the universe who is the source of power. Jesus told his disciples to go, but he also promised he would be with them to guide and strengthen. It is no great task to maintain a true course during the brief and passing day of man's earthly life when it is remembered that a great reward awaits him who is faithful to the end.

When God calls and sends, he also qualifies.

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed

are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

QUESTIONS

1. What was probably the most important feature in the discourse of Jesus with his disciples, as presented in this lesson?
2. What did Jesus mean by the *kingdom of God*?
3. Did the disciples understand the nature of Christ's kingdom?
4. Why have Christians in general not followed the advice Jesus gave in his Sermon on the Mount?
5. Give an effective recipe for discouragement and sorrow.
6. (a) Why has Moses been named as the meekest man in history?
(b) What is meant by meekness?
7. Are meekness and self-confidence inconsistent? Explain.
8. (a) Why should any one "hunger and thirst after righteousness"?
(b) Does such effort or interest involve happiness and pleasure?
9. How is it possible for an individual to develop or secure pure desires and motives?
10. Is war necessary? Explain.

LESSON 17

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—V

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Text: Matthew 6.

The Nature of Prayer.—Jesus did not neglect to teach his disciples to pray. There is in every human soul a consciousness of dependence on some power that is more than human. Wicked men, when confronted with death, will pray. Ninety percent of the soldiers in the Great World War prayed before they went "over the top." No greater relief can come to any afflicted and sorrowing soul than the comfort and consolation of prayer. It is the ballast that holds believers on the strait and narrow road when persecution, poverty, or temptation comes. It is the stimulus which gives hope in time of disappointment, solace in time of grief, courage in time of fear, and deliverance in time of temptation.

What is prayer?

Prayer is the communion of the soul with God.

"Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies."

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters heaven with prayer."

Jesus Prayed.—The fact that Jesus was divine as well as human has led some, who have not completely understood the nature and purpose of prayer, to wonder why Jesus prayed. Did he need or want something that he did not have? Did he find it necessary to inform God of something in the divine plan which had been overlooked or forgotten? Did he pray, not from any particular desire or need, but merely as an example to those who were willing to follow his leadership?

Jesus demonstrated both by his example and by his teaching that prayer is not essentially asking for what we need or want. It is not telling God something he does not know. It is not bargaining with God to exchange obedience and service for divine favor and prosperity. Jesus taught his disciples that an intimate communion with divinity was necessary for the development of those spiritual qualities which lead individuals to see God more vividly, understand his will more clearly, and follow his guidance more willingly. Prayer also relieves the tension and pressure which every human life must endure if he is to successfully meet sin and temptation. Jesus was human as well as divine. His human nature needed the reviving and encouraging benefits of communion with his heavenly Father. He needed to revitalize his purpose with the power of God. He needed the comfort and consolation which his Father alone could give. He needed to harmonize his human nature with the divine plan for his life. For these reasons Jesus prayed.

The Lord's Prayer.—The disciples had probably prayed many times. The custom of the Jews was to pray morning, noon, and night. The Pharisees had made use of this custom to advertise their good deeds and a righteousness they did not possess. The phrasing of their prayers and the enumeration of their virtues came from a desire to be heard of men and not from a worshipful spirit.

In teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus presented to them a model prayer. In it, the ideal qualities of devotion and trust are prominent. Although it contains less than one hun-

dred words and can be repeated reverently in less than one minute, yet it contains the most sublime conception of God and thoroughly covers the scope of human need. Five important features are found in this prayer.

1. "Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name."

The first sentence of this model prayer touches the center of Christian faith and religion. God is not to be considered an arbitrary judge, sitting beside his great book of good and evil accounts, waiting and watching for the opportunity to make record of some righteous or sinful deed. He is first of all to be considered a kind heavenly Father whose great desire is to guide, direct, and advise his children, to comfort those in distress, to strengthen those who are tempted, and to give courage and hope to those who are weak. Such a Father should be approached with assurance and also with reverence. No attitude of the believer is more praiseworthy than the attitude of reverence. Moses was commanded to put off his shoes as he stood on holy ground before the burning bush. Peter, James, and John veiled their faces on the Mount of Transfiguration as they stood in the presence of Divinity.

Reverence continues to mark the attitude of the Christian as he reads the Bible, enters God's house, or approaches his heavenly Father in prayer. No acts are more destructive to spiritual health and growth than deeds of irreverence, and no offense is more heinous in the sight of God than the sin of blasphemy. He who would preserve his contact with the source of all power and blessing must approach his heavenly Father with the confidence of a trusting faith and a reverence of spirit.

2. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven,
so on earth."

The first two petitions of this prayer indicate in no uncertain tones that prayer is not primarily an effort to secure favors from God. Some there are who approach their heavenly Father only when trouble comes, danger threatens, and special blessings are desired. Jesus made clear to his disciples in this prayer that the spirit of him who would

effectively pray, must first of all be in harmony with the Father's will and be willing to render service in the Father's Kingdom. The greedy and selfish soul rushes his own personal wants to the forefront of his prayers and frequently includes nothing more. Jesus emphasized the importance of placing our desires in the proper place. Some things are necessary and some things are of secondary importance. He has a true spiritual culture who is able to distinguish the great from the trivial. He who earnestly and reverently seeks first the Kingdom of God will find that all other things will be added, if necessary.

3. "Give us this day our daily bread."

This ideal prayer also touches human need. Large holdings of real estate, luxury, stocks and bonds, expensive homes, and consequent social influence are not named in this prayer. It is daily bread for which the petition asks. Spiritual power, happiness, and contentment of soul do not involve the rustle of silk, a peculiar dialect, or financial prestige. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he happens to possess. Solomon had wealth, luxury, pleasure, and everything money could buy, but after he had carefully weighed the value of each, he said all was vanity. The judgment of this wise man is worthy of careful consideration.

4. "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Affairs of the spirit again become prominent in this prayer. It is happiness and contentment of soul that bring the highest quality of pleasure and joy to any individual. The world has followed the mirage of wealth, amusement, and worldly power only to find at last that they have failed in their quest for satisfaction and the greatest good. By following such a life formula no one can truthfully say, when he reaches the edge of life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

Jesus, in this petition, suggested that the Father's attitude toward our sins will bear a just relationship to our attitude toward the weaknesses of our fellowmen. Such an attitude does not involve our showing divine wisdom or power. It does, however, require that we stand four-square in our

human relationships, with a determination to show the spirit of forgiveness which we expect God to manifest in his mercy toward us.

No one ever sincerely forgave his debtor who did not receive an immediate happiness and satisfaction of soul which alone was generous compensation for the effort made.

"He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself; for every man has need to be forgiven."

"The truly great man is as apt to forgive as his power is able to revenge."

"If you bethink yourself of any crime, unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace, solicit for it straight."

5. "And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

The thoughtless mind may wonder why Jesus did not place in this petition some suggestion of deliverance from danger, disease, poverty, trouble, sorrow, or persecution. To the mind of the great Master and wise Teacher, such experiences were trivial when compared with the taint and stain of sin.

Job experienced all of these human afflictions and yet was able to say, "Behold, he will slay me; Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him."

Lazarus met the same trying experiences and afterward was rewarded in the kingdom of glory.

Jesus was not guessing when he selected sin as the most disastrous thing that could touch a human life. From temptation and the influence of evil, he taught his disciples to pray for protection and deliverance.

In all of these petitions, Jesus focused the attention of his disciples on the central purpose of human life, which was to bring glory to God and happiness to humankind. To this end Jesus established his kingdom and for the accomplishment of this purpose Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

"O thou by whom we come to God—
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hast trod
Lord, teach us how to pray."

QUESTIONS

1. Name two specific values of prayer.
2. Name three conditions which an individual must meet before his prayer will be heard, or can be accepted.
3. Which of the five features of the Lord's prayer is most difficult for him who would pray this prayer properly?
4. When can an individual be said to have forgiven his debtors?
5. What is meant by the evil one?
6. Does any prayer to God for daily bread relieve any individual of his responsibility to "earn a living"?
7. Why should anyone ask God for what God knows is best for him?
8. What virtue, if any, is found in formal prayers which are memorized and periodically repeated?

LESSON 18

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—VI

Text: Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:11-17; 10:13-16;
Mark 4, 5:1-15.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. A centurion in the Roman army was the commander of one hundred men.
 2. Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, by Malthace, a Samaritan woman, was "tetrarch of Galilee and Perca." It was he who married Herodias and subsequently beheaded John the Baptist.
 3. On the west side of Nain, the steep rocks contain many caves where the people of the city buried their dead.
 4. Beelzebub, or Beelzebul, was the name of a heathen diety who was regarded as the sovereign ruler of evil spirits.
 5. The word "demoniac," as used in the New Testament, was applied to those who were under the control of a demon or evil spirit. This control generally showed itself in bodily disease and mental derangement.
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The Centurion.—After his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus returned to Capernaum. While here engaged in the work of healing and teaching, a soldier approached him with the request that his servant might be healed. He was a centurion serving in the army of Herod Antipas, and had men under his authority. This man was not a Jew, but had

shown favor to the Jewish people and had built for them a synagogue in Capernaum. One of his servants, in whom he had probably developed trust and confidence, had become seriously ill. His wealth, his authority, and the power of the Roman army could avail nothing. Like many others who, in their extremity, find themselves powerless, this centurion came to Jesus. With marked faith and humility he presented his request to the divine Healer. "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Regardless of the fact that Jesus had hitherto limited his work to the Jewish people, he told the centurion his request would be granted in proportion to his faith.

The centurion's conception of Jesus far surpassed that of any of the Jews who had been given more spiritual instruction and larger opportunities. As he, with his military authority, had power to command, so he conceived Jesus, in his own divine kingdom, had power over disease and suffering, and possibly even over life and death.

"And when Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Only under two circumstances is it recorded that Jesus had cause for wonder. These were the faith of this Roman soldier and his rejection by his own people in Nazareth.

The Widow's Son.—From Capernaum Jesus went to Nain, a small village located about fifteen miles southwest of the Lake of Galilee. As he approached the town he met mourners bearing a corpse for burial outside the village. The dead man was the only son of a sorrowing widow. When Jesus saw her he was moved to sympathy and pity. With the same assurance and effectiveness with which he had healed the centurion's servant, he spoke the word and the dead man arose. As he was delivered to his startled and rejoicing mother, those who saw the results of his miraculous power were filled with fear and reverence. They had frequently wondered at his teaching, they had always been amazed at his healing power, but their terrified souls were now aroused to worship as they beheld a man who could also raise the dead. This was the first manifestation of Jesus' power over death. Not since Elisha's time had such power been shown.

Their Belief Superficial.—Their adoration, however, was largely based on the wonderful works which Jesus did, and not on any rational or intelligent belief. They had also been attracted by the personality and teaching of John the Baptist. Later, however, they said concerning John that he "hath a devil," and concerning Jesus, that he was "a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber."

Their Condemnation.—The cities and villages, where Jesus had labored most, seemed to afford the Master his greatest disappointment. When they had persistently given him unbelief for his teaching, scorn for his counsel, and insolence for his patience, he flashed before them a glimpse of the future. Terror must have filled their souls as they listened to the fiery denunciations that came from the lips of him who had so often spoken words of tender sympathy. "But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down into Hades." So completely has this prophecy come true that even the site of the once prosperous city of Capernaum cannot be definitely located.

Power Ascribed to Beelzebub.—After an extended journey through the cities and towns of Galilee, Jesus came again to Capernaum. Opposition to his work was beginning to show. He had violated their traditional and dogmatic theories by his presentation of a sane and thoughtful religion. He had attempted to substitute spiritual devotion for hypocritical formalism. He had taught the necessity of obedience and reverence, but they had ignored his teaching and had profaned his Father's house. He had aroused their antagonism by offering them vital truth for the shallow pretenses which covered their hypocrisy and deceit.

The Pharisees were therefore watching him carefully in order that they might find an occasion to criticize and embarrass him before the people. An evil mind will enable anyone to see evil. When he had healed a dumb man they immediately said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons." To this charge Jesus was not slow to answer. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges." It became evident to all who heard these words of Jesus that, if he had performed

the miracle of healing the dumb man by the power of Beelzebub, it most certainly followed that their sons, who had practised exorcism because of their familiarity with spirits, would certainly stand condemned of partnership with the forces of hell. Jesus also cautioned his critics against resisting their better judgment and blinding themselves to the light and information which had been presented to them. This, he emphasized, was the greatest of sins.

His Parables.—After successfully answering his self-appointed critics, he entered a boat and taught the people by parables. Two reasons probably prompted Jesus to use parables in presenting his message.

1. By using parables he could readily secure the interest and attention of those who would refuse to listen to any message that did not readily fit their own belief and their own preconceived ideas.

2. Jesus could thus completely present the essential principles of his kingdom to many who would appreciate the full force of his teaching only when the parable had been finished. These same two motives prompted the prophet Isaiah to present the parable of the vineyard to the people of the kingdom of Judah. (Isaiah 5:1-4.) The force of these parables seemed to be centered on the nature and purpose of his kingdom. Many would not or could not understand the truth.

The story of the Sower, the Wheat and Tares, the Grain of Mustard Seed, Leaven, the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Fishing Net were used most effectively by Jesus on this occasion.

The Storm.—When Jesus had finished his teaching, he, with his disciples, put out across the Lake of Galilee, that they might find rest after a busy day with the multitude. They had not gone far when a terrific storm broke upon them. Violent storms develop quickly on this lake on account of the deep ravines that border it.

Jesus was asleep in the boat. His human body was fatigued and his conscience was clear. Regret "hath not learned to cry itself to sleep." There were no dark spots on Jesus' life and no stains of sin on his soul. He could therefore lie down to peaceful sleep even on storm-tossed Galilee.

The disciples at last found themselves powerless to con-

trol the boat. They were not novices at such work. Many times they had faced severe storms in their fishing boats. They knew what to do and how to do it, but on this awful night they admitted they were powerless. Like the centurion when he had used his last resort, they went to Jesus. It was well for the disciples that Jesus was on the boat; but it was better that their faith was sufficient to trust his authority. With a calmness that suggested his power, Jesus arose, "and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Little wonder is it that the disciples feared and wondered, "saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

What Jesus did to the Centurion's worried mind, what he did for the heart-broken and grief-stricken widow of Nain, and what he did to the raging waves on the Lake of Galilee, he is able and willing to do for the troubled and sin-wrecked soul of the humblest of his children.

The Demoniacs.—The disciples had directed their journey toward the region of Gadara, a beautiful city, situated on a plateau on the southeast shore of the lake.

When they had landed, two demoniacs who had been living in the tombs of this mountainous coast, approached them. The demons that possessed their diseased minds had caused them to become so fierce and dangerous that they had been driven from their home communities and forced to live alone with their frightful plague. To Jesus, however, their ailment was just another mark of the power of sin to degrade and debauch. "And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go, and they came out and went into the swine; and behold the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters."

The swine-herders and the cured demoniacs rapidly spread the news of what had occurred. "And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders." They were not willing to accept Jesus if his presence meant the loss of hogs. Men continue to seek first their own financial gain and the satisfaction of their own selfish greed, forgetful of the great fact shining forth from every page of life that to "seek first the Kingdom of God" is not only the whole duty of man, but will bring the greatest content-

ment to the human soul. He who would learn this lesson without sad experiences and bitter tears, must keep his mind open to the truth and follow the leadership which Jesus came into the world to supply. With a clear vision and the approval of his conscience, he will then be able to think straight in his relationships to God and his fellowman.

QUESTIONS

1. Account for the fact that the centurion had greater faith and a more accurate conception of Jesus than the Jews.
2. Why should Jesus extend his work to the centurion, who was a Gentile, when the work of the prophets had been largely limited to the Jews?
3. Why did not all people accept Jesus as the Messiah when they saw his miracles and heard his teaching?
4. What was probably the predominant impression among those who saw Jesus raise from death the son of the widow from Nain?
5. What prompted the Pharisees to be so persistent in their attempt to discredit the work of Jesus?
6. Explain at least two of the parables suggested in this lesson.
7. In what way did the disciples show a lack of faith during the storm on the Lake of Galilee?
8. Did the people of Gadara probably have sufficient knowledge concerning Jesus to pass judgment on his identity?

LESSON 19

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—VII

Text: Matthew 9: 10-33, 14: 13-21; Mark 5: 22-43, 6: 30-48;
Luke 8: 41-56, 9: 12-17; John 6: 1-19.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. A *disciple* is one who believes and follows the teaching of another.

An *apostle* is one who is sent forth to teach and bear witness to the teaching of another.

2. Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue which was probably located on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee.

3. Jesus' feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes and his walking on the Lake of Galilee, refute all argument against his miraculous power.

Raising of Jairus's Daughter.—Jesus returned from the land of the Gadarenes, where his presence was not wanted, and crossed over to the other side of the lake.

While Jesus was enjoying the hospitality of Matthew (Levi), who had invited him to his home and provided a dinner for him and his friends, the Pharisees asked his disciples why their Master ate with publicans and sinners. Some of the disciples of John also presented to him certain perplexing questions concerning fasting. To all of these questions he was as willing to listen as he was ready and able to give an appropriate answer. During these busy hours,

a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, approaching him reverently, told him that his daughter, a girl of twelve years, was nigh unto death; he earnestly desired Jesus to come at once and lay his hands upon her that she might recover. Jesus went with him. Meanwhile the child died.

While Jesus was being hard pressed by the multitude that followed, a woman, who had been ill for twelve years, pushed her way through the crowd in order that she might touch the hem of his garment. From some unknown source, she had learned that strength and healing power flowed from the body of the great Physician. Her touch and her faith brought the answer to her prayer. Truly, faith is

“The great world’s altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God.”

As Jesus entered the home of Jairus, the weeping mourners “laughed him to scorn” when he announced that the girl was not dead but only asleep. Taking with him Peter, James, and John, and the grief-stricken parents, Jesus entered the chamber of death. Laying his hand on the corpse, he said, “Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.” All who saw it were greatly amazed when “straightway the damsel rose up, and walked.” As an indication that her restoration was complete, Jesus commanded her parents to give her food. To the divine Son of God death is merely an incident to mark the transition from earthly life to glorious immortality.

This was the first time Jesus had recognized in a special way the three disciples, Peter, James, and John.

Last Visit to Nazareth.—Following the miracle at the home of Jairus, Jesus continued to teach and heal throughout Galilee. Among those who benefited by his kindly sympathy were two blind men, who were the first to proclaim him publicly as the Son of David. (Matthew 9:27.) His plan and probably his desire brought him to the scenes of his childhood at Nazareth, where were centered many beautiful and sacred memories.

He had become famous throughout the entire country. He had taught the message of his kingdom, healed those who were ill, raised the dead, and had even been proclaimed the Son of God, but his own townspeople would neither recognize his merit nor accept his teaching. “And he marveled

because of their unbelief." Blinded by prejudice and unbelief, they had forfeited their title to his blessing. Short-sighted in their spiritual vision, these self-approved critics had lost their opportunity. Saddened and grieved by his rejection, Jesus left forever his boyhood home, and the friends and neighbors he had known since infancy.

The Twelve Commissioned.—Leaving Nazareth for the last time, Jesus commissioned his twelve disciples to go out and preach the gospel he had taught them. The theme they were to emphasize was *repentance* and the *kingdom of God*. They were to go out in pairs and confine themselves to Jewish territory. From this time the twelve *disciples* are sometimes called *apostles*.

Specific directions and miraculous power were given them in order that they might be qualified for their work. The road they were to travel was not to be easy. They were to substitute intelligence for ignorance, purity for sin, sincerity for pretense, spiritual discernment for formalism, light for darkness, and life for death.

These disciples had given up all for the work Jesus commissioned them to do. They had left their homes, their business interests, their friends, their associates, and had forfeited all their personal plans for the future. Few individuals can be more unselfish. What they obtained, however, was large compensation for their sacrifice. The dividends they received were not limited to their earthly life but continued, and shall continue, throughout eternity. They made a good life investment.

Imprisonment of John the Baptist.—Herod the Great had died. His son, Herod Antipas, had succeeded him as ruler of Galilee. Many of the sins of the father reappeared in the son. Contrary to the law, Herod Antipas had taken in marriage Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. Other violations of public sentiment and morality had been committed by him. John the Baptist, being no respecter of persons, and being fearless in his courage, censured Herod severely for his offenses against the principles of law and decency. For this offense John was imprisoned in the castle of Machaerus, a fortress on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.

His Execution.—So vindictive was Herodias because John had dared to criticize Herod's conduct in so far as

it related to her, that she waited patiently for revenge. The time was not long delayed. On the occasion of Herod's birthday, a great festival was given at Machaerus, when Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced before the king. Her grace of movement and beauty of form so pleased Herod that, in an unguarded moment, he promised with an oath to give her anything she might ask. Prompted by her vindictive mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Her request was granted and the work of the great reformer was ended.

"It matters not how long we live, but how."

The Five Thousand Fed.—After a brief experience in their new work of teaching, the twelve disciples returned to Jesus. Their Master having received the depressing news of the death of John the Baptist, and noting that the disciples were weary, invited them to cross the Lake of Galilee for rest. The direction of their course was toward Bethsaida on the northeast shore of the lake. When they arrived, however, the news of their going had brought a great multitude together. Small chance for rest presented itself. As was Jesus' custom and disposition in the presence of need, he at once began to teach and to heal. No individual ever came to Jesus in sincerity of faith and went away disappointed. The modern world, like this ignorant and superstitious multitude, can with profit sit at Jesus' feet and learn the message of light and life.

Although the night was approaching, the crowd remained. They were not anxious for the close of a thirty-minute sermon, nor did they become restless because special attractions were not found on the program. They were fascinated by his personality and interested in the gracious words that came from his lips. At the twilight hour, no little stir was made among the disciples concerning food for the people. They were far removed from towns and villages; they had made no provision for such an emergency; the night was rapidly approaching; and the people must have food. After a hurried consultation among themselves, in which the disciples thought of everything except Jesus, they came to him and advised him to send the people away to the villages where they might buy bread.

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The same words, "Send them away," come ringing down through the centuries. Some who are anxious to use their two hundred shillings for personal luxury have bellowed forth, "Send them away." Others who are always seeking a cloak to cover their physical laziness and spiritual inactivity have repeated the excuse, "Send them away." The echo, "Send them away," continues to come from all who, in church activity or personal life, have neither properly considered the Master in their reckoning nor his service in their life program. Individuals are only responsible for efforts. Jesus will care for results.

Jesus then said to Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" In response, Philip replied that two hundred shillings (thirty dollars) was not sufficient. Andrew said, "There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves and two fishes: but what are these among so many?" Jesus then directed the disciples to seat the multitude "in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties." Even Jesus himself used order and organization in his work. Wasted effort and misdirected energies in Christian service are as much a violation of religion, as a violation of good judgment and common sense. When the great crowd of people had been arranged in an orderly fashion, Jesus "took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up into heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they all ate, and were filled. And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men."

Why use the loaves and the fishes?

One of the greatest truths which Jesus taught his disciples involved the principle of effort and service. A few people, there are, who believe that, since it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts," all that is required of them is a reverent attitude and a pious countenance as they sit at Jesus' feet and wait for the great Divinity to cleanse the world from sin.

God gave Moses a great task to perform, but not until after he had become qualified for the work by long years of preparation, and was willing to remove the napkin from his talent.

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but not until after someone had rolled the stone away.

Jesus fed the five thousand, but not until after the disciples had arranged the people in ranks and a little boy had done his bit.

Jesus Walking on the Water.—After the people had been fed, Jesus sent them away and told his disciples to depart to the other side of the lake. They were loath to leave him and the sea was rough. After some persuasion, however, they departed and Jesus retired to a secluded spot on the mountain top to pray. After a very busy day, Jesus, like all of his children, needed to renew his spirit by contact and communion with his heavenly Father.

So rough was the lake and so contrary the wind that the disciples were unable to reach farther than the middle of the lake when the dawn of a new day began to appear.

Weary from a long struggle with the waves and terrified by the increasing violence of the sea which at times threatened to destroy their boat, they found themselves in dire distress. Their depressed spirits, however, were suddenly aroused as they beheld a ghost-like form to approach them walking on the water. As the frightened disciples shrank in terror from this weird spectre, they heard a well-known voice speak to them from across the waves, "Be of good cheer. It is I, be not afraid."

With mingled feeling of faith and doubt, Peter challenged the identity of Jesus by the request that he be permitted to come to him on the water. The consent of Jesus being given, Peter stepped out of the boat into the water. The nearness and violence of the waves and the doubt in Peter's soul were too great for his faith, and he began to sink. In his fear, "he cried out, saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

This miracle and the astonishing power which Jesus showed, together with the fact that the wind ceased as he entered the boat, created such a profound impression on the minds of the disciples that they involuntarily exclaimed, "Of a truth, thou art the Son of God."

QUESTIONS

1. Did Jairus probably believe Jesus to be the Messiah?
2. What was probably the greatest barrier to Jesus' work in Nazareth?
3. Name two possible reasons for Jesus' sending his disciples out to preach.
4. Why should Jesus give his disciples miraculous power?
5. Why are miracles similar to those which Jesus performed not essential in modern days?
6. Were the disciples to be criticized when they failed to consider Jesus in their plans for feeding the great multitude of people?
7. What was probably the predominant impression created in the minds of the people when Jesus showed his miraculous power in feeding them?
8. In what way will faith in God assist believers in their material prosperity?

LESSON 20

The Second Year of Christ's Ministry—VIII

Text: Matthew 15, 16, 17: 1-21; Mark 7, 8, 9: 1-27;
Luke 9: 22-42; John 6: 41-71.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. Decapolis was the name given to a certain district in which ten cities were rebuilt immediately after the conquest of Syria by the Romans, 65 B.C.

2. The baskets used in gathering up the fragments following the feeding of the five thousand, were small hand baskets. Those used later for the same purpose in connection with the feeding of the four thousand were very much larger, probably corresponding to the modern clothes hamper.

3. Mt. Hermon, approximately 10,000 feet high, was located at the northeastern extremity of Palestine. From its summit could be seen the fountains of Jordan on the east and west, and the cities of Dan and Caesarea Philippi on the south.

Opposition Develops.—The Pharisees had been attentive to the teaching and actions of Jesus, but with minds that were sensitive only to violations of their own customs and traditions, and with eyes that marked nothing but what they believed they could use as argument against him. Their envious and vindictive spirits plainly showed when certain scribes and Pharisees came from Jerusalem and asked him, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." The

washing suggested by the Pharisees was not a process of cleansing but a ceremonial rite. This rite, when properly performed, required strict obedience to more than a score of special rules or directions involving the position of the hands, manner in which the water fell on the hands, movement of the hands during the ceremony, and the manner in which the water left the hands. Failure to properly perform this rite was to commit a sin as heinous as murder, and therefore liable to the same penalty of death. To these egotistic preachers of purity and virtue, blind leaders of the blind, Jesus did not hesitate to reply. Well he knew the tenacity with which many of these narrow-minded and hypocritical leaders held to certain traditional customs which had blurred their spiritual vision for centuries.

Tradition is not without value. It has a large place in human life as well as in the zone of the spirit. Jesus did not discard tradition. He did, however, test tradition by the standard of living truth and spiritual intelligence. "And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? And ye have also made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

"This people honoreth me with their lips,
But their heart is far from me."

These were plain words. Jesus was well aware of the effect such frankness would have, not only on the Pharisees and scribes, but also on many of the leading Jews who heard him. He had aimed a deadly blow against the petty, trivial, and traditional forms on which the Pharisees had builded their official power and influence. He had shown how weak and impotent were such ceremonies as the washing of hands, when compared to the eternal principles of purity of life, righteousness of soul, and devotion of spirit. He knew that henceforth his steps would be followed by these self-named and self-commended judges of righteousness. He knew that justice would be perverted and false accusations made against him by these human buzzards of scavenger mind. He knew his life was doomed and that the cross was in sight.

Peter's Confession.—Many of the common people had crowded around Jesus to see his miracles. Some had been

fed with no cost to themselves. Some, like the centurion and Jairus, had only a vague conception of his identity and mission. When Jesus broke with the Pharisees, ignored their ceremonial rites, and referred to himself as the Bread from Heaven, his followers began to leave him. Turning to his twelve disciples, he asked them, "Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the holy one of God."

The Syrophenician Woman.—Leaving the district of Bethsaida, Jesus, with his twelve disciples, made his first and only visit across the Lebanon Mountains to the Mediterranean Sea and visited the regions of Tyre and Sidon. Here he met a woman of Canaan who, although she did not belong to the chosen people of Israel and had not received the spiritual inheritance of the Jews, showed an enlightened faith and a strength of purpose that would have done credit to any teacher of the Jewish law. Her plea that Jesus would cure her afflicted daughter would take no denial. So earnest was she in her prayer that she was willing to take even the place of dogs, if only Jesus would consent to grant her request. Her persistence and her faith brought the answer she desired. This woman was one of the few Gentiles who were brought to spiritual light by Jesus during his ministry. After a brief time on the western boundary of Palestine, Jesus returned by way of Decapolis to the Lake of Galilee. On this journey many miracles were performed, most important of which was the feeding of four thousand persons who had followed him for three days. In this miracle, seven loaves and a few small fishes were used and seven basketfuls of fragments were gathered up.

Caesarea Philippi.—When Jesus returned from the western coast he stopped for a brief time at Magdala where the Pharisees and Sadducees asked him for a sign from heaven. Having refused their request and having warned his disciples against their subtle trickery and traps, he started with his disciples for Caesarea Philippi.

As he saw the growing opposition of the Pharisees and recognized the serious problems which were to come to his followers, he desired a private conference with his disciples. When they had isolated themselves from the trailing Pharisees and the curious multitude, Jesus asked his disciples,

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"Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" Various answers were given in which they reported some believed him to be Jeremiah, some thought he was Elijah, and a few were assured that he was John the Baptist. After all their opinions had been given, Jesus made his question personal, "And he saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

No greater question has ever been asked and no more significant answer could have been given than Peter gave. When Jesus asked this question, he did not need information. He knew the minds of men. It was necessary, however, that he should counsel with his disciples on such a vital subject. They were to represent his kingdom and teach his message throughout Palestine and throughout the centuries. This same question continues to face every individual who has an opportunity to learn the message of light and truth which Jesus came into the world to give. Not what a man says or what he does counts so much in his answer to this question, as what he thinks and believes in his own soul. The Pharisees obeyed the letter of the law, they paid their tithes, and they knew how to say their prayers, but they neither knew God nor the laws by which he governs men.

They answered this question when they ignored his teaching and criticized his disciples. Pilate answered it when he washed his hands. The question cannot be ignored. Some may postpone and delay their verdict, but all must answer.

Jesus used this occasion of solitude to pull back the screen that concealed the future. He desired that his disciples might catch a glimpse of the road which he soon must travel. He told them he must suffer and suffer grievously, be condemned to death, murdered, but that on the third day he would rise again. Such a revelation aroused Peter to say with his lips what his better judgment should have repressed. "And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." Men continue to believe they can improve on God's plan by making certain changes which are the product of their own superficial and selfish minds. To all such, Jesus continues

to answer as he answered Peter and in words that cannot be misunderstood, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."

The Transfiguration.—After six days of teaching and healing, Jesus again sought a solitary place. Taking with him his disciples, he went north from Caesarea Philippi to the foot of Mt. Hermon. At the base of the mountain he left all but Peter, James, and John. These he took with him. Little did these three selected associates know, as they ascended the mountain with Jesus for prayer, that they were about to enter a celestial atmosphere and behold scenes too beautiful and too sacred for words.

When they had reached a lofty and secluded spot, Jesus began to pray, and as he prayed his person seemed to glow with a bright and dazzling light. Wonder and amazement filled the souls of the three startled disciples. Suddenly two others, Moses and Elijah, appeared standing with Jesus in the brightness of his glory. As the two heavenly visitors seemed about to depart, impulsive Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." It was difficult for Peter to lift his mind above structures of wood and stone. His voice and spirit were quieted, however, and the faith of all encouraged, by a divine voice which spoke as a benediction on the scene, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

Not many people can qualify to stand in such sacred places. It was necessary for Moses to take the shoes from off his feet on the Mountain of God and behold the bush which burned with divine fire, before he could stand with Jesus on Mt. Hermon. Elijah must first make test of his faith on Mt. Carmel before the derisive mob of heathen priests, before he could be selected to represent the prophets on this mount of glory. Peter, James, and John, mere children in God's great school of training, had left all and followed Jesus before they ascended the Mount of Transfiguration and beheld the glorious divinity of their Teacher and Master.

The Law represented by Moses was to be revitalized by a new commandment of love. The prophets impersonated by

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Elijah had done their work. They had laid the foundation and they had builded well. With added glory, Jesus was to continue their work of teaching.

The transfiguration was the crisis in the ministry of Jesus. Here was the converging point between the Old Testament and the New. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus were in this scene pointed out for him who has spiritual vision. Glory always follows as a reward to the faithful.

The Epileptic Healed.—On descending the mountain, Jesus charged the three disciples, who had accompanied him, not to publish what they had seen until after his resurrection. As they arrived at the foot of the mountain, Jesus found that his disciples had been trying, with great embarrassment to themselves, to heal a young man afflicted with a grievous form of epilepsy. When Jesus arrived upon the scene he said, "bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked him; and the demon went out of him: and the boy was cured from that hour."

To the question of why his disciples could not cure him, Jesus replied that their failure was due only to a lack of faith.

"Faith is a grasping of Almighty power;
The hand of man laid on the arm of God;
The grand and blessed hour in which the things impossible
to me
Become the possible, O Lord, through thee."

QUESTIONS

1. What enabled the Pharisees to see anything in Jesus or his work which they could criticize?
2. (a) Were the Pharisees probably sincere in the importance they attached to the ceremony of washing the hands?
(b) Does any similar attitude of mind show itself in modern days?
3. Name five mountains in Palestine which were prominent in Bible history and name that which made each important.
4. Did Peter indicate by his confession a keener spiritual discernment or a stronger faith than the other disciples?

5. What important incidents marked the close of life for Moses and Elijah?

6. How did Peter reach the conviction that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God"?

7. What was probably the most predominant impression produced on the minds of the disciples by Jesus' announcement of his approaching death?

8. Account for the lack of faith shown by the disciples at the foot of Mt. Hermon when they attempted to heal the epileptic.

LESSON 21

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—I

Text: Matthew 17: 27, 18: 1-25; Luke 9: 46-48;
John 7, 8, 9, 10: 1-18.

The Approaching Gloom.—Serious problems faced Jesus as he began the last year of his work. No greater agony of body or soul ever came to humankind than was crowding in upon him. Gloomy and foreboding as the future seemed, Jesus faced it with fortitude and courage. Suffering always has its compensation for him who keeps a straight course and a clear vision. Through the misunderstanding of the common people, and the malicious criticism of the Jewish rulers, he could hear the final verdict of the centurion on Calvary, "Truly, this was the Son of God." He was fortified for the hatred of the Pharisees and the insolence and mockery he endured in the court of Caiaphas when he saw the approving visage of his heavenly Father. Although he could hear the traitorous bargaining of Judas, yet he could also hear Peter's prayer as he wept bitter tears of repentance. Through all of the shadows that gathered around him, he could see the cross of sacrifice.

Love, reverence, and worship are due the divine Saviour of mankind as he courageously set his face to meet such a test and thereby to perfect a plan of redemption for all who would believe on him.

Jesus Prepared to Leave Galilee.—Jesus and his disciples returned from Mt. Hermon to Capernaum. The weight of Jesus' teaching from this time was centered on his

THE THIRD YEAR OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY—I

coming suffering, but it was so presented by him that his followers were only filled with fear and wonder and did not understand the full force of his message.

On reaching Capernaum, Jesus advised Peter to secure a piece of money from the mouth of a fish he had caught, and with it to pay the tax demanded of him for the expenses of the temple services. This coin was sufficient to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter.

Many annoying questions which had been in the minds of the disciples were brought to him for solution. The question of how greatness was to be determined in the new kingdom was explained by Jesus when he placed before them a little child as the ideal type of greatness. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Peter also presented his question concerning forgiveness, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" In reply Jesus made clear, not only to Peter but also to the other disciples, that forgiveness is always conditioned on repentance, and that it is not subject to times or numbers. He emphasized his reply by relating the striking parable of the Two Debtors.

Feast of Tabernacles.—Jesus had, for more than a year, confined his work to Galilee and had absented himself from Jerusalem, which had become the storm-center of opposition against him and his work. When, however, his work had largely been accomplished, he could afford to set his face toward Jerusalem and confront his enemies.

The Feast of Tabernacles, celebrated by the Jews in October, commemorated the entrance of the Jews into a life of freedom after their captivity in Egypt. Jesus did not attend this festival until probably the seventh or eighth day, which was called "the great day" of the feast. Standing in the temple, he surprised and startled them when he cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." Nothing could probably have aroused the hostile Pharisees more quickly than such a statement coming from Jesus at such a time. Irritated almost to madness, the rulers sent officers to arrest him, but they returned without him, and with the humble confession that they could not seize him because "never man

so spake." The Jewish leaders would have taken him and destroyed him, even without the semblance of a trial, had not Nicodemus confronted them with the statement, "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" Baffled by the technical requirements of the law, and from fear of an uprising of the people, the Jewish rulers were forced to delay the execution of their criminal plans.

The Woman Judged.—No subtle plan or malicious trick was omitted by the scribes and Pharisees to ensnare Jesus in his words. They therefore brought a woman before him who had been charged with the sin of adultery. Conclusive evidence was presented. With an attitude of superior purity and holiness, the leader of their group placed the case before Jesus by saying concerning her, "Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her?"

According to the judgment of these Jewish lawyers, Jesus had no escape. He could not but endorse the law of Moses and thus place the stamp of approval not only on their verdict of death for this woman, but also on their ceremonial requirements, which formerly he had not only ignored but criticized. After some delay, during which Jesus "stooping down, and with his finger, wrote on the ground," he faced them with penetrating eyes that read the life record of their own souls and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Confused, embarrassed, and self-convicted, they all "went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last."

The Blind Man Healed.—The fury of the Pharisees was further aroused by his healing on the Sabbath day. They were trailing his footsteps and watching his movements, to the end that they might find sufficient evidence to legally convict him, and thus free themselves of his presence and influence. Passing a man who had been blind from his birth, the disciples of Jesus asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They could have suggested no more human quality of their spiritual condition than was revealed by this question. They were not primarily concerned with the blind man's affliction or with any plan for aiding him. They were, however, willing to call the attention of the people to his misfortune and they were equally anxious to add to his burden the cruel sting

of suspicion. To their inquisitive words Jesus replied, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." After following carefully the directions Jesus gave him for his cure, he received his sight.

When the Pharisees heard what Jesus had done, they said, "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath." When they found the man who had been born blind, they told him that Jesus was a sinner. "He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." On hearing these words from the man who had been healed, the Jews were aroused to violent anger and cast him out.

Jesus, knowing what had been done, found the man who had been blind and said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" When the man answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?", Jesus replied, "He it is that speaketh with thee." The man who had received sight to see his benefactor, at once began to see Jesus with a spiritual vision similar to that which came to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, as he confessed, "Lord, I believe."

It was unfortunate that the scribes and Pharisees, doctors of the law, and rulers of the Jews, were unable to rid their minds of blind prejudice and to free their souls of hypocritical egotism sufficiently to see as the blind man saw and to know Jesus as he knew him. Men continue to live in blindness when the light of eternal day continues to be offered to all who are willing to see. Selfishness, hypocritical egotism, and destructive unbelief still blur the vision of men to see the divine Son of God.

The Good Shepherd.—The prompt belief and devotion of the man born blind and the persistent opposition and bigotry of the Pharisees prompted Jesus to give them a pointed and timely message concerning the relationship which must exist between him and those who believe on him.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door unto the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and robber. I am the door; by me if any man enter, he shall be saved. I come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the

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sheep. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father."

QUESTIONS

1. Why should Jesus, who was divine, shrink from any human calamity or suffering?
2. Which one of the disciples came from Judaea?
3. What particular sin did Jesus mean to censure when he placed a little child before his disciples as a type of greatness?
4. What human weakness renders forgiveness of others difficult?
5. Name two specific results which Jesus had accomplished during the first two years of his ministry.
6. Name three great annual feasts of the Jews.
7. Who was Nicodemus?
8. What should determine the judgment which should be pronounced on violators of the law?
9. Is it possible for any individual to save his offspring from sensitiveness to the same sins he himself has committed?
10. What was the probable reason for Jesus speaking in terms or parables which the people did not completely understand?

LESSON 22

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—II

Text: Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-22;
Luke 15:11-32, 18-23; John 11:1-46.

Seventy Evangelists Commissioned.—Many disciples had frequently followed Jesus from one place to another in order that they might listen to his teaching and see the miracles he performed. As he saw the attitude of the Pharisees growing more hostile and knew that his work was near its close, he appointed, as evangelists, seventy men who had heard his message and believed in his kingdom. These he sent forth with miraculous power and with specific instructions for their work. How long they worked and where they went is not definitely known. They returned after a short time, however, with joyful and enthusiastic spirits.

Teaching of Jesus Intensified.—After the seventy evangelists were sent forth to teach the people concerning the nature of his kingdom, and the laws of life which governed it, Jesus continued his work with seemingly increased vigor. Many of his greatest miracles were performed and his most significant messages given to the people during the last few months of his ministry. Among the most important of these were the raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46), the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), and the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23).

The Raising of Lazarus.—During the two months between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Dedication, Jesus probably went to Galilee where he continued his work of teaching and healing. Returning to Jerusalem, he again

addressed the people at the Feast of Dedication and spoke plainly concerning himself. When he revealed himself as equal with God, the Jews immediately charged him with blasphemy. Opposition became so pronounced that he left Jerusalem and crossed the Jordan into Peraea. Here an urgent request came to him from two sisters, Mary and Martha, asking that he hasten at once to their brother Lazarus, who was seriously ill. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," and had frequently visited their home. He informed the messenger to report to those who had sent him that the illness "was not unto death," and then continued his work in Peraea.

In two days, however, Lazarus died and Jesus, turning to his disciples, said, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." When Jesus came near to Bethany he learned from Martha, who had come out to greet him, that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days. Jesus assured the sorrowing woman that her brother Lazarus should rise again. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," said Martha. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." The Master was grieved because his most intimate friends believed his power was limited to healing a few diseases. They could not conceive that death was a mere incident to the divine Son of God. Saddened in spirit, Jesus wept with his sorrowing friends as they led him to the cave or tomb where Lazarus was buried. Jesus was cautioned by Martha concerning entering the tomb, but he replied, "Take ye away the stone." The stone having been removed, Jesus uttered a fervent prayer to his heavenly Father and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes." As Lazarus came stumbling out of the tomb, "Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

The reunited family, with Jesus and his disciples, then returned to the home of Lazarus, followed by an amazed and wondering crowd. A few, however, hastened to report to the scribes and Pharisees what had happened.

Jesus had raised three people from the dead; the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus. In consequence of these wonderful deeds, the Pharisees held a

consultation with Caiaphas, the high priest, concerning what they should do to rid themselves of a man who was becoming the hero of the multitude. "So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death."

The Prodigal Son.—In order to explain the forgiving mercy of his heavenly Father, Jesus presented to the people a parable of human love. With the exception of the love of Christ himself, no affection is more binding or more sacred than the love of parents for their children. Even wild animals will change their dispositions and forget their fear when danger threatens their offspring.

"A certain man had two sons." Many men have hoped and prayed that they might have even one son who would be worthy to reproduce their ambitions, continue their work, and prolong their name.

Jesus knew the human soul when he presented this parable. He knew he could not approach closer to the vital breath of humanity. The father in Jesus' story loved his sons, not because he was affectionate, but because he was a father. He had made adequate provision for both and had probably made personal sacrifices, which he kept hidden from sight in his own soul, in order that his two sons might not be limited in their chances for development and success.

"And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." He had probably longed for the time when he could free himself from parental supervision and receive his inheritance. He wanted to "have a good time," he wanted to rid himself of all restraint, and he wanted, for a time at least, to do as he pleased. He was a good fellow with his pals and represented that group of young men who frequent the church only when not to do so would create friction in the home. He probably wore his clothes well, considered advice from his parents unnecessary, and appeared superior to the standards of the small town in which he lived. This younger son wanted to leave his father's home and the restraint of his home community. He wanted to go to the big city where conditions were worthy of his smartness, where the sounds were loud and the lights bright, where religion was unnecessary and did not hamper his own personal desires, where things were moving and life was not monotonous, where fun and pleasure were on every side, and where beautiful women

danced gracefully, and sold themselves for a few coins. He went.

Wise people learn by precept and example; fools, sometimes, learn some things by experience.

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father." Poor boy! It was fortunate for him that he "came to himself." It was most unfortunate that it was necessary to spend all of his inheritance, become ashamed to look at his own visage, and be sent into the fields to feed hogs, in order that he might learn a simple lesson of life. It is necessary, however, for some individuals to be pricked and to bleed from the thorns of their own planting before they can clearly understand that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." His father could do nothing else. The bitter tears of sorrow the grief-stricken father had shed in his absence became tears of rejoicing that his son had returned. The father's heart had been broken. It was now healed. The son had suffered degradation, shame, and hunger. He was now wiser in mind and stronger in character.

What this father did for his foolish and ungrateful son, the heavenly Father is anxious to do for those who have wandered away from the influence of family prayers, or have intentionally turned away from their parents' homes and their Father's house to find the object of their quest in a far country.

The Rich Young Ruler.—"And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" No teacher was ever asked a more significant question. From the beginning of time to the present hour, men have been seeking an answer to this question.

Is it possible that a recipe, prescription, or formula can be found which, if followed accurately, will guarantee eternal life? Is there anything an individual can do, say, feel, or believe which will insure an immortal home in the land of glory? Is there a specific thing an individual must do to be saved? These were the questions to which the rich young ruler wanted answers. He wanted to know if he could secure

an option on eternal life, and what it would cost him if he decided to make the investment.

Jesus answered his question, "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. The young man said unto him, 'All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, and follow me."

The answer was specific but the price was more than the young ruler wanted to pay. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted it at his own price. He was concerned about his soul, but he was more concerned about his money. He desired to be perfect, but he insisted on determining for himself the standard by which his perfection was to be measured. This young man had not learned that he who exchanges his money for more money gets nothing in return but money. He who pays out in order that he may receive something in return, acquires nothing. He who gives, and in return receives contentment and happiness in his own soul and treasure in heaven, is rich beyond calculation, and has qualified on one of the two particulars named by Jesus as essential for entrance to eternal glory.

A recommendation for having kept the commandments cannot be used as a passport to the heavenly Father's kingdom. Motives are important. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he happens to possess. There are some things money cannot buy.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two features which the seventy apostles probably emphasized in their messages.
2. What two important features in the parable of The Prodigal Son seemed most applicable to the Jews?
3. Is it necessary for some individuals to learn some lessons by experience? Give a reason for your answer.
4. What serious mistake had the rich young ruler made?
5. Does the inheritance of eternal life require that commandments shall have been kept and money given to the poor?

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6. In what particular is wealth a barrier to spiritual development?

7. Should death be considered an accident, an incident, a disaster, or merely a transition?

8. Why did not the scribes and Pharisees receive definite assurance of Jesus' divinity from such miracles as the raising of Lazarus?

LESSON 23

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—III

Text: Matthew 20: 1-34, 21: 1-11; Mark 11: 1-10, 14: 3-9;
Luke 19: 11-44; John 12: 1-19.

The Last Journey to Jerusalem.—Restoring to life a man who had been dead four days was no common incident. The news of Lazarus' resurrection spread rapidly throughout the entire country. Even the people in distant Galilee were excited. The Pharisees noted this unrest among the people and became more watchful of Jesus' movements. As he came from the region of the Jordan toward Jericho, he again told his disciples of the fate that awaited him at Jerusalem. Many people were following him on this journey to his last Passover; some from motives of curiosity, some because they were devoted to his leadership, and some soft-footed agents who were seeking evidence against him. On through Jericho he passed, healing and teaching as he went. Blind people, poor people, and even little children, joined the procession that followed him to his doom. Excitement and wonder seemed to move the entire population toward this grand procession as it moved up the slope to Mount Olivet.

Zacchaeus.—"And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich, and he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. And he ran on before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked

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up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house."

No statement of Jesus could probably have brought greater consternation to the Jews who heard it. Here was a publican who had hired himself to hated Rome. His business was to collect taxes by extortion, if possible, and by force, if necessary, from the reluctant Jews. He was a traitor, an oppressor, and worse than an outcast. He had dishonored Abraham, profaned his religion, and had bargained with their greatest heathen enemy for a consideration in cash. To recognize such a robber of widows and oppressor of orphans, was to violate the Jewish conscience; to pity him was to nurse an object of horror; but to dine with such a human vulture was unthinkable. The crowd heard Jesus' words with amazement. Anger replaced curiosity, caustic words were reinforced by offensive sneers, and hatred quieted their words of eulogy and commendation.

"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore four-fold. And Jesus said unto him, Today is salvation come to this house. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Knowing that the honest attitude and frank words of Zacchaeus were not sufficient to clarify the Jewish vision which had been blurred with prejudice and hatred, Jesus presented to them the parable of the Kingdom, "because they supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear."

In this parable Jesus taught that the Jews had accepted the talents God had given them, but had concealed them in napkins of legal technicalities and ceremonial rites. They had not used their opportunities to increase their own spiritual power or the devotional life of their people. For the use they had made of their talents, Jesus warned them that each one must give his account. By their own testimony would they be judged.

When Jesus passed through Jericho, Zacchaeus overcame the difficulties in his way in order that he might see Jesus. The same opportunity was available to the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus continues to pass with opportunities for service and with blessings of happiness.

There are still a few sycamore trees.

The Triumphal Entry.—The final week of Jesus' life on earth had been reached. There was no uncertainty in Jesus' mind, no state governor who might grant a last-minute pardon, and no possible commutation of sentence. Jesus must die and he knew it. With calmness of soul and loyalty to his Father's will, he faced this last week with a devotion of spirit possible only to the divine Son of God.

Arriving near Bethphage and Bethany, Jesus said to two of his disciples, "Go your way into the village over against you, in which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him. And if anyone ask you, Why do ye loose him? this shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him." On the back of this unbroken animal Jesus continued his last journey up to the Mount of Olives and to Jerusalem. He was not approaching the city as he had done when he was a mere lad of twelve years, nor as he had frequently done as one of a group on his way to some annual feast. He was entering Jerusalem as Pompey entered Rome, heralded as victor, hero, and as king. Well, however, did Jesus know he was marching to his tomb.

The very atmosphere seemed to be charged with a tense expectancy as to what the immediate future would reveal. It was Sabbath morning preceding the Passover. With him were his loyal friends from Bethany. Some interested Galileans also followed with the hope that they might see another miracle. In the procession were also his disciples. Peter was in the crowd: he who had acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God, but who, very soon, was to deny with an oath that he ever knew him. Judas, the traitor, was there. John, the beloved disciple, was probably leading the colt on which Jesus sat. Most important of all, the future leaders of his kingdom were there and formed no small part of the great multitude which continually increased as the procession moved toward Jerusalem. At last they reached the summit of the Mount of Olives. Before them spread out in the morning sun was the sacred city of a thousand years of hallowed memories.

In the calmness of this April day, heaven itself seemed to pronounce a benediction on the scene.

Some serious questions would have come to Jesus' disciples if they had known the events of the coming days. Did the

Jews know no justice? Did they have no devotion, no mercy? Could it be that a people selected by Divinity, protected by miracles, and fed from the very hand of God himself, were about to reject their Messiah and Deliverer? Could it be that a nation that could count among its sons such men as Moses, Isaiah, and Elijah was about to condemn and crucify the Son of God?

Little wonder is it that Jesus wept as he beheld the beautiful and beloved city across the valley on Mount Zion; whose people had stoned the prophets and rejected Jehovah; whose sin had become loathsome to decency and self-respect; and whose life was being ground out beneath the iron heel of Roman domination. Strong men have wept with less cause. Jesus' tears were not the product of a weak sentimentalism, as the rulers in the temple soon discovered to their shame and embarrassment.

The procession proceeded down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. The news had reached the city. The people had heard of the resurrection of Lazarus. Crowds came out of the city to join in the triumphal parade. The procession had become an enthusiastic and hilarious multitude. Many took up the cry of Peter, "Hosanna to the Son of David," as they spread their garments and branches of trees on the roadway in adoration for the new King. The scribes and Pharisees, however, were not unmindful of what was happening. The cries of adoration had shocked these learned, haughty, and self-sufficient doctors of divinity. One of them was sufficiently bold to advise Jesus to rebuke his disciples. The reply of Jesus was not tardy. "I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." This answer was a challenge to his enemies. It was not misunderstood.

A Den of Robbers.—Jesus went to the temple, not to worship, not to learn, but to punish. He was matched against the scholarly scribes and the long-coated Pharisees; the Man who walked on the sea and stilled the waves, against those whose most valiant deed was to give second-hand opinions and quote their authority from some musty scroll; the divine Son of God against the dwarfed bigots of empty formalism. The conflict was to be vigorous and definite.

As Jesus entered the sacred temple, the odor of an ill-kept market place and the noisy din of wrangling merchants greeted him. With righteous indignation and fiery zeal, which

only Jesus could show, he ruthlessly drove out those that bought and sold, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and with caustic scorn condemned those who were in authority. And he asked them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? But ye have made it a den of robbers."

Disappointment.—The triumphal entry did not bring Jesus the crown which the people expected. The temple had been once more cleansed. The great day came to its close. In the twilight hours Jesus went out and returned to Bethany.

Had he failed?

The people had heralded him as a king. Even his disciples had become hopeful under the spell of banners, palm branches, and shouts, that he might assume leadership in the kingdom in a manner similar to that which brought victory and independence to their nation under the leadership of a Joshua, a Gideon, or a David. He had not become king and the ruling classes were definitely turned against him. Jesus, however, was not disappointed. He knew, as all thoughtful people will finally learn, that the kingdom of God does not consist in jeweled crowns, robes of purple, and autocratic power, but in convictions of soul, a living faith, and a control of spirit.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did not the Pharisees arrest Jesus and imprison him if their opinions concerning him were based on fact? What charges could they have truthfully brought?
2. What important factor should be seriously considered in selecting a vocation?
3. What had Zacchaeus to do to secure salvation?
4. As a result of Jesus' statement to Zacchaeus, what predominant impression was probably made on the Jewish mind?
5. Why did Zacchaeus make any statement about his goods while talking with Jesus?
6. How is money in any vital way connected with an individual's religion?
7. For what had the Mount of Olives been prominent in the Old Testament?

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8. What probably prompted the high priests to grant permission to buy and sell in the temple?

9. What did the disciples probably expect as a result of the triumphal entry?

10. What was the effect on the scribes and Pharisees of the triumphal entry and Jesus' second cleansing of the temple?

LESSON 24

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—IV

Text: Matthew 21: 18-46, 22: 1-40; Mark 11: 12-14, 20-23, 12: 1-34; Luke 20: 1-40.

The Fig Tree.—Jesus returned from Bethany to Jerusalem on the day following his Triumphal Entry. "And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward forever. And immediately the fig tree withered away." Well could Jesus have continued in the words of John the Baptist, "And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

The great Teacher omitted no occasion to teach his disciples the principles of faith and stewardship. On these two great factors in Christian life his kingdom was to be erected. Joshua had faith, but his sense of stewardship caused him to use his best military judgment. John the Baptist had faith, but he used much time in preparation for the work God gave him to do. Zacchaeus had faith, but he also gave half of his goods to feed the poor. A substantial faith will always come to the surface in service. The barren pretense of the fig tree suggested, in a forceful way, the hypocritical formalism of the Jews. Jesus made no effort to conceal in his teaching that unless they repented, they would be destroyed in a similar fashion. Causes that bring results at one time will likely do so at another.

The disciples, being greatly surprised when they saw the tree die under Jesus' withering curse, asked him, "How did

the fig tree immediately wither away? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, ye shall receive."

Jesus Questioned.—When Jesus came to the temple, the ever lurking spies who represented the scribes, chief priests, and elders approached him again with a premeditated determination to ensnare him by subtle questions. So shriveled, cramped, and narrow were their mental processes, they did not know that their puny minds were no match for divine wisdom. "And they said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus said unto them, I will ask you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me." After going into consultation and discussing the possibilities of any answer they might give, they replied, "We know not."

Again they asked him, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? shall we give, or shall we not give?" After Jesus had called their attention to the image of Caesar on one of their common coins, he said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

In a united effort of opposition, the Sadducees had also joined forces with the Pharisees and the Herodians against Jesus. One of the Sadducees, either prompted by his associates or because he thought his own brilliancy and shrewdness could embarrass and confuse Jesus, asked him concerning a woman who had had seven husbands, "In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of them?" Jesus replied, "When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels in heaven." Then a lawyer, who had probably convinced himself of his own cleverness, asked him, "What commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Not only were his questioners and all who heard him convinced of his shrewdness and keenness of thought, but they were astonished at his wisdom. They had attempted to entrap him with a seeming desire for information. They had tried to submerge him with theology. They had hoped to at least puzzle him with trick questions. They had miserably failed. They had failed like Xerxes failed when he tried to bind with chains the waves of the Hellespont.

"And no man after that durst ask him any question."

Jesus not only answered their questions with an amazing frankness, but he also emphasized the truth on which his answers were based. This he did by parables, the most important of which were the Two Sons, the Wedding Feast, and the Vineyard.

The Two Sons.—"A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise; and he answered and said, I go sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

From the time of Abraham, the Jews had professed to serve Jehovah; they had made great pretensions in their show of obedience to his commands, but such pretensions were only a veneer to conceal their insincerity. They had erected a beautiful temple for worship, and later profaned it; they had planned an elaborate program of intricate ceremonial rites and sacrifices to advertise a piety which did not exist; they had insisted on special rules for washing the hands and had made long prayers in public, but had robbed widows and oppressed orphans; they had exhibited a pious countenance and had worn long cloaks, but both were signal marks of hypocrisy; they had made a covenant with Moses, and had confirmed it with Joshua, that they would be loyal to the God who had protected them, but they had ignored his leadership and disobeyed his commandments; they had heard the voice of the prophet and had listened to the preaching of John and Jesus, but had repented not; truly, they had promised to go and work in the vineyard, and went not.

With the sincerity of the sinful woman at Jacob's well vivid in his mind, and the repentant words of Zacchaeus still echoing in his soul, "Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say

unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

The Wedding Feast.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son."

A marriage is a great event in any home. Whether it be a wedding in a humble cottage or surrounded by the expensive luxuries of the rich, nothing, except death itself, reaches so close to the vital life of parents as the marriage of their son or daughter. In the parable of Jesus, the wedding preparations were completed, the invitations sent out, the wedding dinner served, but the guests did not come. It is difficult to imagine anything that would bring greater chagrin or embarrassment to the host. No greater insult could be offered him. No wound could cut deeper.

God had given Abraham a special invitation to the kingdom of God, the invitation had been renewed to Moses and through him to the people. Repeatedly had Joshua, Samuel, David, and the prophets presented the invitation to the Jews. Even John the Baptist had told them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. With the exception of his faithful disciples they had even refused to recognize the invitation. When the king in the parable had become conscious of the attitude of his invited guests, he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast: and the wedding was filled with guests."

The Vineyard.—In this story of the vineyard Jesus pictured for the Jews their entire history as a nation under the guiding and protecting hand of God.

"A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country." Nothing had been omitted by the owner of the vineyard to make it productive. Every possible convenience had been provided for its protection and cultivation. Results were expected. When harvest time came the owner sent a servant to secure fruit from the vineyard and a report from the husbandmen. They had been placed in charge of the vineyard and had agreed to use their best efforts to the end that the vineyard might be profitable for the owner. When

the owner's servant arrived "they took him and beat him, and sent him away empty." The owner, being willing to believe that, through some misunderstanding, a mistake had been made, and being anxious to continue his faith in the husbandmen, sent another servant; "and him they wounded in the head and handled shamefully." With almost unlimited faith in the husbandmen, and desiring to give them the benefit of every possible doubt, he sent a third servant to them. "Him they killed." With prolonged patience the owner continued to send servants in the hope that he might secure his report and thereby reestablish faith in his own mind and honesty in the lives of his husbandmen. All of these, they ruthlessly dismissed, "beating some, and killing some." The owner, grieved and disappointed, had one son on whom his affections had been centered. "He sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son." With greedy thoughts concerning the vineyard and with no sense of honesty and justice, which at times has driven even criminals to play square, "they took him, and killed him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard."

"What, therefore, will the lord of the vineyard do?" The answer was plain.

As the secret plots of the scribes and Pharisees were unveiled by this vivid parable and the scheming, plotting, and vicious plans of the Christ-killing high priests were held up before them, it is not to be wondered at that they left him and went away.

QUESTIONS

1. How far was Bethany from Jerusalem?
2. What determines the product which must come from each life if the individual is to avoid the condemnation which came to the fig tree?
3. Is it possible for any one to secure any specific thing for which he prays if he has faith?
4. Did the scribes and Pharisees interpret the accuracy and forcefulness of Jesus' answers as an indication of his divinity?
5. What was the principal effect of Jesus' answers on the Jewish rulers?

6. Is it probable that the Jews appreciated the full force of Jesus' parables?

7. Name two specific incidents in which the Jews had ignored any invitation they had received to enter the kingdom of God.

8. Which of the two sons in Jesus' parable is most frequently seen in modern days?

LESSON 25

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—V

Text: Matthew 23: 13-39; Mark 12: 41-44; Luke 21: 1-4;
John 12: 20-24.

The Jewish Leaders Denounced.—Love, patience, encouragement, instruction, and even miracles, had been used by Jesus to lead the Jewish people to a reasonable understanding of his mission and the nature of his kingdom. The scribes, Pharisees, and chief rulers had blinded their eyes and had refused to believe in him. The shallowness of their boasted wisdom and scholarship had been demonstrated. Their cunning and strategic plans to ensnare Jesus in his words had been defeated. Their haughty pride had been humbled. Their hypocrisy and the insincerity of their empty repetitions had been exposed. Their advertised righteousness had been revealed as a sham. They had sinned against light and truth. They had maliciously plotted to brand Jesus as an impostor, a blasphemer, and a law-breaker.

They returned to the temple, which they had recently left in embarrassed confusion, and again they found Jesus. He had something to say to them. His message was not to be given in any apologetic whisper. There, in the presence of the multitude who thronged the temple, and with his approving heavenly Father as witness, Jesus denounced the snake-like and blood-thirsty wretches who had been following his trail in words that cut deep into their hardened souls.

"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter."

They had barred the door to the kingdom of heaven with themselves outside. Their spiritual life did not harmonize with what they pretended to be. The quality of their character did not correspond with their dress. Their selfish jealousy of titles proclaimed their need of them. They had preferred blindness, scoffed at the truth, killed their souls, blasted all hope, and had shut out the light of eternal day from the souls of men.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves."

No plainer words ever came from Jesus' lips. He knew he was addressing those who should later pronounce sentence of death upon him. He was unafraid. He had long known that these hypocrites not only had been corrupted by the poison of their own venom, but they had sought to bring others under their death-producing influence. To Jesus, who had healed leprosy and raised the dead, their leering visages presented a more loathsome leprosy of character and a more fatal death of soul. Even the contagion of their disease brought a deadly blight on all who came within their influence.

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, that say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor."

Few people are more offensive than those who, because of ancestral negligence, misdirected education, ignorance, or superstition, are unable to know accurately or think straight, and yet labor under the gross misunderstanding that their judgment is superior to all others and their verdict is final. Their argument is as insipid as a child's prattle and their reasoning only an offensive odor.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy, and faith."

Truly were they hypocrites. They were careful to observe the rules for washing their hands, and yet they desecrated

the temple with their slimy greed. They conscientiously paid their tithe, but they robbed widows' houses to secure the money. They were careful concerning the technical rules for purification, but retained in their souls the corruption of selfishness and dishonesty. Men continue to "strain out the gnat and swallow the camel."

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess."

Every community has a few people who are willing, whether building a home or building a character, to place brown stone on the front and sewer brick on the side. Some people love their neighbors as themselves, and when they cannot, then they act as if they did.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

The gluttony, rapine, and drunkenness in the private lives of these self-labeled heralds of eternal life proclaimed loudly their hypocrisy.

The victrola records in the home are more accurate indications of character than the attitude assumed on Sabbath in the family pew.

"Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The Widow's Mite.—Almost all of the third day of Passion Week, Jesus spent in the temple teaching and refuting the subtle questions of the Pharisees. As he watched the rich and the poor placing their offerings in the treasure-chest which was located in the women's court of the temple, he took occasion to commend the woman who had contributed two mites (one penny).

"And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, verily, I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had. Even all her living."

The Lord continues to stand beside the treasury in modern days. Second only to the gift of personal service, is the

gift of money. The God of the earth and of the universe does not need money.

"For every beast of the forest is mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills,
I know all the birds of the mountains;
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."

God measures human life by the motives and faithfulness of stewardship. No finer test of character or religion can be devised than a desire to serve and a desire to give. Ability and money are tools to use and not luxuries to enjoy. The best service an individual can render and the greatest gifts he can bestow for God's kingdom and the good of his fellowman, constitute but a meager interest on the capital God has invested in his life.

"On the day of our birth a lease is signed.
On the day of our death accounts are closed."

Greeks.--During the busy hours while Jesus was in the temple, Andrew and Philip came to him and reported that certain Greeks who had come to the Passover requested an interview with him. These Greeks were not Jews who lived in Greece and spoke the Greek language, but were thoroughbred Greeks who had been converted to the Jewish faith and had come to the Passover to worship.

When Jesus heard the request he realized that, with small opportunities for spiritual growth, they had surpassed in their faith the Jews who were God's chosen people and had been given special privileges and blessings. He also realized that the time had come when into his kingdom would come people of every race and language. With a vision of what his death and resurrection would mean in the redemption of all people and the evangelization of the world, he replied to Andrew and Philip, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified; verily, verily I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

Thank God for such a statement! It is not man's work to convert souls and save them from eternal death. Human individuals do not keep the "Lamb's Book of Life," nor are they responsible for writing names therein. This responsibility belongs to God. Man, however, is vitally responsible for the work of properly lifting up the Master from the earth and teaching his message. The result belongs to Divinity.

QUESTIONS

1. What was probably Jesus' purpose in denouncing the Jewish rulers?
2. Name one specific way in which the Pharisees were keeping men out of the kingdom of heaven.
3. What is a proselyte?
4. What attitude should a member of the Christian Church assume toward the religious convictions of a man of different faith?
5. Is it right to appear what we are not, either by the dress we wear, by the car we drive, or by the temporary cleanliness of our homes when guests are expected?
6. Why did the Greeks more readily believe in Jesus than the scribes and Pharisees?
7. Why did Jesus interest himself in the money offerings of the people?
8. Why did not the scribes and Pharisees openly resent the plain words Jesus used in his denunciation of them and their work?
9. Explain why some church members magnify some matters of trivial importance and seemingly ignore others of great importance.
10. Is the same standard of conduct which Jesus used for measuring the scribes and Pharisees in operation in modern times?

LESSON 26

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—VI

Text: Matthew 24, 25, 26: 1-16; Mark 13, 14: 1-11;
Luke 21: 5-38, 22: 1-6.

The End Begins.—Disgust, hatred, and revenge filled the minds of the scribes and Pharisees during the twilight hours of Tuesday, the third day of Passion Week. They had been publicly and bitterly denounced by Jesus. He had forced them to confess their ignorance of subjects in which they pretended to be masters. He had ridiculed their knowledge of the Scriptures before those who had revered their authority. He had torn away the pious veneer which concealed their hypocrisy. He had pronounced upon them withering words of judgment which they could not easily forget. All of this had been done by a carpenter from Nazareth, a man who had disregarded their customs, ignored their traditions, and associated with publicans and sinners. Their vindictive minds and their wounded pride demanded immediate action.

Conference of Leaders.—All petty differences of doctrine and belief were laid aside by the leading sects of the Jews in their common desire to rid themselves of their hated critic. A private conference was called to consider plans for his removal. In this conference were trusted representatives of the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Herodians, priests, elders, and probably among them was the weak and spineless Caiaphas. No caucus of corrupt men ever convened in which was more of envy, bigotry, pride, hate, and contempt. No group of men ever discussed a common cause

in which was shown less of justice, mercy, honesty, equity, and righteousness. After considerable discussion, two conclusions were reached:

1. That Jesus must be put to death.
2. That he must be killed legally and not by violence, because the multitude would probably resent the destruction of a man whom they considered a hero.

Jesus on Mount Olivet.—While the chief rulers and leaders of the Jews were plotting the destruction of their Messiah, Jesus was on his way to Bethany at the close of the last day of his public work. When he came to the top of the Mount of Olives, he and his disciples sat down for a brief talk concerning the coming crisis. With scenes before him which only a few days before had caused Jesus to weep in pity for his beloved city and people, he revealed to his companions the time when the end would come. He supplemented this sad news with the parables of the virgins and the talents, in which he urged them to be faithful and watchful.

"Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

Rulers Approached by Judas.—As the chief rulers were discussing the conclusions they had reached concerning the destruction of their arch-enemy, a messenger reported that one of Jesus' companions desired to appear before them. Suspicion immediately marked the glances of those who had been frustrated in their recent plots to entrap the wonder-worker in his words. Their nervous fear was equaled by the sneering scowl of those who had recently been interviewed by Judas. The traitor had already told some of them of his willingness to deliver his Master into their hands. Being assured that the unexpected visitor was no spy, they admitted him to their conference. Whatever of spiritual anguish or self-reproach ever comes into the soul of a traitor, must have come to the surface in the countenance of Judas as he stood there before the enemies of him who had been his best friend, his companion, his teacher, and his Lord.

They had seen this man before. Little did they think, however, that a man who had willingly followed Jesus from place to place, had heard all that Jesus said, had accepted his teaching, had seen all of his miracles, had been one of his disciples, and had been selected as one of the twelve,

could thus betray such confidence, perjure his soul, and contract with them to sell out for a few silver coins.

The blood-money agreed upon was thirty pieces of silver, the price of a common slave, and equal to \$18.24 of our money. Men sometimes receive more than money for what they sell. Judas accepted the thirty pieces of silver when he sold the Son of God, but he took away from the market place a soul that was blackened with shame, a conscience that took sleep from his eyes, and a spirit that, within a week, would cry out in anguish and despair from the shadows along any path he might travel. He had been taught that the way of the transgressor was hard, but he had persuaded himself that his own personal judgment was superior to all advice and counsel and that he was master of his own destiny. He had not considered that every man is forced to live with his own thoughts, and that regret and remorse would continually follow him.

“Not sharp revenge, nor hell itself can find
A fiercer torment than a guilty mind,
Which, day and night, doth dreadfully accuse,
Condemns the wretch, and still the charge renews.”

Even the scribes and Pharisees must have loathed Judas for this treacherous deed. Even criminals despise a traitor.

Motives of Judas.—Why did Judas sell out his interests in the kingdom of heaven, make his name a reproach throughout the ages, and thrust his soul forever into darkest despair? The Record gives no answer. Four possible factors may have contributed to his motive:

1. Judas was the only disciple from antagonistic Judaea. Jesus did most of his work in Galilee because the Jews of Judaea would not accept his teaching. It is possible that Judas, during his discipleship, had frequently returned to his home community. While on these visits, he was probably reproached, scorned, and derided because of his association with the new Rabbi from Nazareth. Few people can endure such ridicule and remain untainted.

2. He may have been controlled by avarice and greed. Some people are willing to bargain their honor, their character, and even the friendship of their loved ones, for a price. To such individuals nothing is too sacred to sell.

Judas had shown this mercenary tendency at the home of Mary in Bethany.

3. He may have grown impatient with the progress Jesus seemed to be making in his work. Jesus had said he came to establish a kingdom. No indications of his kingdom were visible. The leading Jews, in whose hands Jewish authority was placed, had opposed him. He believed Jesus had power because he had seen his miracles. Might not a crisis hasten the program? If Jesus came to establish his kingdom, would not the plot he had made with the Jews force him to indicate his plans and policy?

Saul also became impatient with God and followed his own roadbook. The road, however, led to his death on Mt. Gilboa.

4. Unbelief in Jesus. Greed may have so occupied the thoughts and desires of Judas that his opportunities for spiritual growth were not used. His associations in his home land of Judaea and the delay in the coming of the kingdom may have created serious doubt in the mind of Judas concerning the divinity of his Master. If Jesus were not what he claimed to be, if he were an impostor, if he were a man like other men and could be killed like other men, if he had been deluded by Jesus, as his friends had frequently told him, and if he were following a lost cause, would it not be to his advantage to save what he could yet secure from the wreckage? An individual can so tenderly nurse an evil thought and so persistently persuade himself of its innocence, that to sin seems no offense.

One or all of those four motives may have so grown by accumulation in the mind of Judas that he finally said to the chief priests and rulers, "What are ye willing to give me, and I shall deliver him unto you?"

The man who fights against his own conscience and his better judgment is as much a traitor as he who fights against his own country. Only a loyal and patriotic soul can withstand the temptation of a piece of gold.

When advised that a certain city could not be taken, Philip of Macedon said, "Is there not a pathway to it wide enough for an ass laden with gold?"

Growth of Sin.—Traitors do not develop in a night, and murder is not committed in a day. The mark of Cain found on the faces of those who fill our prisons and on some who

walk our streets, is not the product of one evil thought or a single temptation, but the result of sinful meditations and conscious guilt. He who would commit a great crime must first of all close his eyes to the light, kill his conscience, and silence his mother's prayers.

"Know'st thou not all germs of evil
In thy heart await their time?
Not thyself, but God's restraining
Stays their growth of crime."

QUESTIONS

1. State three specific reasons for the antagonism which the chief rulers had developed with Jesus.
2. Was the hatred of the scribes and Pharisees based largely on personal grievances, or offenses which Jesus had committed against the Church or state?
3. Is it probable that, in the conference before which Judas appeared, any praiseworthy motive was shown by these Jewish rulers?
4. Which of the four factors, named as motives for Judas' treachery, was probably most effective in his guilt?
5. Which of these four factors seems most common in modern sin?
6. Were there probably some of the chief rulers who believed in the teaching of Jesus?
7. Name two predominant thoughts that probably came to the minds of the disciples as Jesus talked with them on the Mount of Olives.
8. Do the evil influences which frequently surround people palliate, in any degree, their sin?

LESSON 27

The Third Year of Christ's Ministry—VII

Text: Matthew 26; Mark 14:10-72; John 13, 18:1-27;
Luke 22.

The Fourth Day.—During Wednesday, the fourth day of Passion Week, Jesus remained with his friends in Bethany. The assassins had made their bargain. Judas had received his silver. Events were moving rapidly toward the greatest crisis in human history.

Many Jews returned in the morning to the temple that they might again see the man who had said he was equal with God. Many of the chief rulers who had contracted for his blood on the preceding night also appeared in the temple. They were looking for the unwelcome Nazarene with an air of satisfied anticipation. They wanted to look upon Jesus for the first time with the assurance that he would soon be a victim of their revenge. He was not there. Did his absence indicate that Judas had merely acted his part to deceive them? Had Jesus learned of their secret plot and escaped? These and many other uncanny fears must have entered the minds of the chief rulers as they moved about through the temple looking only for him who had ridiculed their traditional customs, ruined their trade, and advertised their hypocrisy. Again on the following day they looked for him, but he did not appear.

The Lord's Supper.—On the afternoon of Thursday, his disciples prepared for the Passover. He who could cast out demons, quiet the waves, and raise the dead, had no desire to run from danger and the fearful crisis that awaited

him. Consequently, in the evening which was the beginning of Friday, he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John, to an upper room in Jerusalem where they were instructed to make ready the Passover.

No one will ever imagine the sadness that filled Jesus' soul as he, with his disciples, walked leisurely along the well-known road from Bethany to Jerusalem, and sat down around the table together for the last time. He had eaten with them on the stormy sea, on the mountain top, and on the shore of Lake Galilee, but he had never sat with them around the table when the atmosphere was so charged with tragedy. In this selected group were those who soon, very soon, would be driven from him. One of the number would deny, within a few hours, that he ever knew him. Two of their number, within a day, would be dead. Farewell seemed to be whispered in every ear.

For a few short hours, however, they were together. Jesus had much to say to them which would occupy no small place in the memory of these men in later days. Regardless of the fact that this was the last Passover he would eat with his disciples, and notwithstanding the burden that weighed him down, the small and petty qualities of human nature came to the surface when his disciples began selfish and childish bickerings for places of honor at the table. Instead of criticizing them, Jesus girded himself with a towel and began, as a menial slave, to wash their feet. This service was rebuke enough.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins."

Thus the Passover of the Jews, celebrated to commemorate their deliverance from the destroying angel in Egypt, was transformed into a Christian ordinance to remind all believers of the sacrificial death of the Saviour of the world.

The Betrayer Announced.—During the conversation at the table, the disciples were struck with amazement and alarm when Jesus suddenly said, "Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Could it be possible that such foul deception lurked in the mind of anyone of their

trusted band? Could it be possible that any of them could betray him who had taught them to live and love?

Let it be said to their credit that they did not begin to look at each other with suspicious or condemning eyes. On the contrary, "they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man goeth even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born."

These words must have cut like a knife into the inmost heart of Judas as he sat in the presence of his Lord and Master, who was even yet willing to open the gates of mercy for his blighted soul, should he repent. A smile of hypocrisy marked the traitor's visage as he forced himself to conceal the foul treachery which already was causing his nerves to twitch and his eyes to shift in a panic of fear. A few daring questions pierced the soul of Judas. Was Jesus in truth the Son of God? If divine, did he know the foul treachery which he had already condemned as worthy of eternal death? Would he openly reveal to the group as they sat about the table the identity of the traitor? If he did so, would they not immediately set upon him and kill him? The cowardly soul of Judas was horrified when he thought of what might happen at any moment.

To Judas, however, there seemed to be no retreat. He had burned his bridges. At last, under the pressure of a guilty conscience and the anguish of a warped and cringing soul, he could retain his self-control no longer. He arose, and went out into the darkness of the night. The other disciples probably thought he had left on an errand to buy food for the following day. Jesus, however, knew he had left his companionship forever.

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

Gethsemane.—On their way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus suggested that all of them should be offended and their loyalty most severely tested. "But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that thou today, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me

thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."

Having crossed the brook Kedron, they came to the garden of Gethsemane, located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. The time was midnight. At the entrance to the garden, Jesus left eight of his disciples and then proceeded with Peter, James, and John to a secluded spot for prayer. Here he requested his three special friends to remain in prayer while he proceeded a little farther to fight out his battle for humanity. "And he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground."

The Betrayal.—While Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas, with those who had been commissioned by the chief priests to take Jesus, appeared at the entrance to the garden. Judas had said to the leader of the hostile band, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him, and lead him away safely."

No thrust, not even the crown of thorns, could have pained Jesus more than to be betrayed by the kiss of one who had pledged his loyalty and devotion.

"And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him." No one but a mother and the Son of God could have called Judas a friend at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane.

Trial before Annas.—The time was past midnight when the soldiers bound Jesus and led him through the quiet streets of Jerusalem to the palace of the high priest. Only two of the disciples, Peter and John, followed Jesus to his trial. John, being known to the high priest, entered the court with Jesus, but Peter remained at the entrance. The maid who kept the door probably noticing Peter's nervousness, asked him, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not." This was Peter's first denial of his Lord.

Annas, before whom Jesus was first tried, was a man about seventy years of age. He had been deposed, and was,

at this time, probably a deputy high priest and president of the Sanhedrin.

The fact that the office of high priest had degenerated into a position from which political favors were distributed, together with the fact that Annas was a Sadducee and violently opposed to Jesus' teaching, rendered him a prejudiced judge. He knew that when Jesus cleansed the temple he had not only slandered his political influence and authority, but, by overthrowing the tables of the money-changers, had taken from him his greatest revenue. These facts incensed the minds of the time-serving priests against Jesus. Of this brood of parasites, Annas was leader.

Jesus was first questioned by Annas concerning his doctrine and his disciples. He hoped that something might be deciphered from his words which could be used as an accusation against him. To all such questions Jesus replied, "Ask them that heard me." One of the officers interpreting this reply as insolence, or at least an evasion of the question asked him, struck Jesus and said, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" This was the beginning of the personal violence which was thrust upon Jesus.

By continued and persistent questioning, Annas could find no evidence on which to base an indictment. It is difficult to convict justice, condemn the truth, and make legal the assassination of innocence. He therefore sent him across the courtyard to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who was also a Sadducee and the official high priest.

Trial before Caiaphas.—Caiaphas was the equal of Annas in his shrewdness, maliciousness, and treachery, but inferior in his courage, determination and ability. Before this puppet judge the second illegal, irregular, and farcical trial of Jesus was held.

The Lord's Look.—During the trial, Peter sat near the door waiting for whatever might happen. A man, who was probably a guard, noticed him and said, "Thou art one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not." This was Peter's second denial of his Master. He had probably forgotten that he had pledged his loyalty to Jesus and guaranteed it with his life. Within an hour another approached him and said, "Of a truth this man also was with him." To this Peter replied with an oath, "I know not this man of whom

ye speak." Did he not know Jesus? Did not Peter say at Caesarea Philippi, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?" Had he not been with Jesus on the sacred Mount of Transfiguration? And had he not proposed to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus? Had he not gone down out of his fishing boat and walked on the water of the Lake of Galilee and risked his very life to meet his Master? Had he not been one of the three chosen disciples who had, that very night, entered into the closest communion with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane? And had he not drawn his sword in defense of his Lord?

Peter was nursing his own fear. He was tampering with his soul. Almost while he was making this, his third denial, "the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." In a flash, the look of Jesus brought to Peter's mind the statement of his Master, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Self-condemned, he followed the only road that seemed open to him. "He went out, and wept bitterly."

The trial proceeded.

For what crime could Jesus be indicted?

After repeated attempts to bring charges against him in which one hesitated to make charges which he knew another would immediately deny, they resorted to false witnesses in a desperate effort to save themselves from chagrin and embarrassment as a court of justice. The testimony of these false witnesses, however, was so shallow and so far-fetched that even these unjust judges could not use it with any degree of satisfaction or self-respect. At last driven to desperation by the silence of Jesus even in the presence of much false and contradictory testimony, the fearful and inconsistent Caiaphas shouted from his judgment seat, "Answerest thou nothing?" Even to such a question from an exasperated judge, Jesus remained silent. Caiaphas was not only becoming mentally confused and rapidly entangled in the false testimony the conspirators had secured, but all of them were exposing their own treachery and they knew it. No statement from Jesus was necessary to convict them. Caiaphas, trembling with emotions of fear and excitement, again bellowed to his calm and silent prisoner, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art

the Christ, the Son of God." The reply of Jesus was definite, "I am."

As soon as this answer was given, Caiaphas, with a show of horror which he did not feel, pronounced him guilty of blasphemy and asked for a verdict. "They answered and said, He is worthy of death."

Following the sentence of death, their insolence began to show itself. Few mobs ever used less consideration for their victim than these foul-minded priests showed for their Messiah. "Then did they spit in his face and buffet him; and they smote him with the palms of their hands." After they had given their morbid minds the satisfaction of having personally insulted Jesus, "the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate."

QUESTIONS

1. Were the chief rulers probably sincere in their belief that they could destroy Jesus?
2. Name two distinct purposes which are served by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.
3. Compare or contrast the attitudes of Judas and Peter toward sin.
4. Name two possible motives which prompted Jesus to pray in the garden of Gethsemane.
5. Give two reasons for the difficulty experienced by the chief priests in securing a verdict against Jesus?
6. Why did Peter deny Jesus?
7. Does Judas' sin of betrayal or Peter's sin of denial seem the more heinous?
8. Why was it seemingly more difficult for Judas to repent than for Peter?

LESSON 28

Jesus' Trial

Text: Matthew 27: 1-24; Mark 15: 1-15; Luke 23: 1-24;
John 18: 28-40, 19: 1-16.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. A procurator was a ruler of a small province under the general authority of Rome. Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judaea.

2. A tetrarch, like a procurator, was a ruler of a small Roman province. Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea.

3. The Sanhedrin had its origin in the court of seventy elders which Moses organized to assist him in governing the Israelites.

4. Pilate held his office as procurator under the supervision of Vitellius, who was the Roman president of Syria.

Injustice and Insolence.—Annas, the religious leader of the Jews, was the first trial judge before whom Jesus was brought. His insolent character was clearly shown by the questions he asked, and served only to reveal his disdain and hatred for the prisoner.

Jesus was next taken to the high priest, Caiaphas, who had summoned a few members of the Sanhedrin to an irregular night meeting. Here Jesus was ridiculed, reviled, and finally charged with blasphemy.

Following this illegal trial, Caiaphas and his selected band

of conspirators withdrew to perfect their plans for the regular meeting of the Sanhedrin the following morning. During the intervening hours, Jesus was left to the mercy of a curious and lawless rabble that had gathered in the courtyard. He was bound, and defenseless. The wild and bestial instincts of these human vultures seemed to come to the surface as they blindfolded Jesus, spat in his face, and beat him. Even one of the guards, into whose care Jesus had been committed, willfully neglected his duty and struck him in the face.

The Sanhedrin.—About six o'clock in the morning, Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin for his first formal trial. All of the members were present, with possibly the exceptions of Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and Joseph of Arimathea. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees joined their forces at this trial to rid themselves of the Rabbi from Nazareth who had criticized their selfishness, ignored their ceremonial rites, and uncovered their hypocrisy. They were determined on the conviction and the penalty of death, whatever the cost.

To realize their purpose was not easy. They had no authority to inflict the death penalty and any charge they could bring against him would probably not be considered an offense by the Roman procurator. After careful consideration they were hopelessly forced back to the question which had previously been asked him by Caiaphas. "Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth. And the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate."

Pontius Pilate.—Pontius Pilate became the sixth procurator of Judaea A.D. 26. His capital city was Caesarea, but during the Jewish feasts his seat of government was located in Jerusalem. Pilate was hated by the Jews. This hostile attitude was probably caused by his cruelty, insolence, and oppression. The antagonism was mutual. Pilate had a haughty disdain for the Jews, ignored their religion, and, in all matters of government, failed not to show the rough hand of Roman authority. The Jewish leaders took Jesus before him only because they had no authority within their council to inflict the death penalty. They were deter-

mined Jesus should die, but they expected no favors from Pilate.

The Charge.—The Jews well knew that no charge in which religion was a factor would have any weight in Pilate's court. They therefore presented three charges which they hoped would serve their purpose.

1. A disturber of the peace. "We found this man perverting our nation."

2. Rebellion. They testified they had also found him, "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar."

3. Treason. Many witnesses said that he claimed to be "Christ, a King."

It must have seemed ludicrous to Pilate that these Jews who despised the Romans, and continually fretted under foreign authority, should be so enthusiastic in bringing before a Roman court one of their own countrymen on the charges of rebellion and treason. Well did Pilate know they would readily welcome any leader who might be able to successfully oppose his authority and the power of the government he represented. The Jewish leaders, however, with no thought of loyalty to Rome and with no desire to enforce her laws, had deliberately chosen the road which led to the execution of their Messiah. The addition of lies to the crimes they had already committed seemed to them of small consequence if only they could convict their prisoner. Sins never come singly.

Pilate's Weakness.—Pilate, like other human weaklings, considered the holding of his position of primary importance. All other things were secondary. To show efficiency as a procurator by avoiding friction and rebellion within his province was more important to Pilate than justice, honor, or truth. Suspecting the charges that were brought against Jesus, Pilate had the prisoner brought within the palace for private questioning. The malicious, treacherous, and hypocritical Jews could not enter where there was leaven or leavened bread without being contaminated throughout the day. They consequently remained outside because such a corruption would render them unfit to eat the Passover.

Pilate's suspicions concerning the charges were confirmed by his private interview with Jesus. He, therefore, returned to the crowd that was before the palace gate and reported, "I find no fault in this man."

Were they defeated? Was their plan to kill Jesus about to fail? Was their plotting and scheming to secure charges against this hated Galilean to be wasted? Was this carpenter from Nazareth to continue to undermine their authority by exposing their hypocrisy? Could it be possible, after all their efforts, that he would be permitted to live? Their determined purpose and the irritation produced by many sleepless nights aroused them to more urgent appeals.

"He stirreth up the people," they persisted, "teaching throughout Judaea and beginning from Galilee even unto this place." Although Pilate hated the Jews and had no interest in Jesus, yet he was willing to do anything to avoid political friction and an uprising of the people within his jurisdiction.

Herod Antipas.—When he learned from the snarling priests that Jesus had done some of his work in Galilee, he immediately transferred the case to Herod Antipas, who was tetrarch of that province. Herod, like Pilate, was in Jerusalem during the feasts. Again Jesus was hurried through the streets by the jeering mob to Herod's court. He had been informed some time before that this same Herod would kill him if he did not leave the country. To this threat Jesus had replied, "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected." What now would be the verdict of this Roman killer when Jesus stood before him as a prisoner, bound, beaten, and scarred by violent hands?

The blood-thirsty and debauched murderer of John the Baptist was interested in meeting for the first time this wonder-worker of whom he had heard much. To the insinuating and insolent questions asked by Herod, Jesus made no reply. When both priest and ruler had ridiculed his claims of divinity, scoffed at his teaching, and profaned his innocence, they put on him a gorgeous robe and sent him back to Pilate.

The Condemnation.—Pilate, the court of last appeal, had already rendered his verdict. "I find no fault in this man." Had new evidence been discovered that made it necessary for Pilate to reopen and review the case? Would Pilate pervert justice and degrade his court by changing his decision? Was fact a cheat and truth a liar?

Pilate was troubled when he saw Jesus again before him. He had tried to shift his responsibility and congratulated

himself that he had succeeded. The personality and suggestive words of Jesus concerning his mission had unnerved him. Herod had refused to accept the responsibility. His own wife had warned him to have nothing to do with this just man. Pilate may not have believed in God, but he believed in spirits that spoke in dreams and wielded daggers in the dark. He wanted to save Jesus and he wanted to displease the chief priests who, at least on three different occasions, had shown themselves antagonistic to his government.

"And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers of the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him." Pilate prostituted his court by arguing with the chief priests concerning a prisoner whom he had repeatedly declared to be guiltless. He forfeited all respect for law when he agreed to compromise justice by chastening the innocent. Like a spoiled child to a foolish parent, the chief priests continued their pleading. After offering to release unto them a noted criminal as a substitute for Jesus, and after washing his hands before them in a futile attempt to cover his own criminal weakness, he delivered to them the Son of God to be crucified. Truly, Pilate had washed his hands but all the water in the vast ocean could not remove the stain of blood which he carried with him to his doom as a deposed ruler and exile in the wilderness of Gaul.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jesus tried before Annas and Caiaphas, if neither of these trials was formal or legal?
2. What was the purpose or function of the Sanhedrin?
3. Were the chief priests probably sincere in any of their charges against Jesus?
4. Why should Pilate or Herod be afraid to release Jesus?
5. What significance was attached to Pilate's washing his hands in the presence of the people?

6. Had Pilate not sufficient experience to know that dishonestly avoiding a plain duty will *always* bring failure, suffering, and remorse?

7. What effect would Pilate's attitude in the trial of Jesus probably have on the peoples' obedience to law?

8. Will the sincere and faithful performance of duty always bring success and happiness?

LESSON 29

The Crucifixion

Text: Matthew 27: 27-60; Mark 15: 16-47; Luke 23: 24-56;
John 19: 16-42.

The King of the Jews.—"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands."

Pilate tried to convince himself that he had made every effort to save Jesus from death. He had proclaimed his innocence before the Jewish leaders who pled for his execution. He had offered to release him in the place of Barabbas. He had referred the case to Herod. He had ordered him scourged to satisfy the mob's thirst for blood. He had referred the case to the Sanhedrin, knowing their supreme council did not have the power to inflict the death penalty. He had appealed to their sense of justice by saying he found no fault in him. He had done everything but meet his duty honestly and fearlessly as a Roman judge.

Regardless of the fact that he had made every effort to find a half-excuse for delivering Jesus into the hands of the Jews to be crucified, and notwithstanding the fact that he had washed his hands to indicate his innocence, yet the gaze of that silent face stared at him in his dreams and the words, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," followed him into exile and to his doom.

The final verdict being given, Pilate, no less than the chief priests, was anxious to have the entire matter finished and his mind freed from annoying thoughts. He therefore dic-

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tated the inscription which was to be placed at the top of the cross on which Jesus was to die. The inscription, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS," was written in three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, so that anyone of the great multitude gathered at Jerusalem for the Passover might be able to read it. "The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written."

The Procession to Calvary.—The trial and arguments before Pilate's court had occupied the major part of the forenoon. As an exhibition of Rome's power and willingness to punish offenders, two criminals of the lowest rank were to be crucified with Jesus. Such a spectacle would have great effect on the multitude of people gathered at Jerusalem.

The three wooden crosses were placed on the shoulders of the men condemned to die. The picks, shovels, hammers, and iron nails were ready. At last Pilate gave his command and the centurion led his soldiers and an excited and morbid mob out through the city gate to Calvary.

The procession had not gone far when Jesus began to stagger under his burden. Nervously exhausted by the torture and torment of the preceding night, weakened by the loss of blood which continued to drop from his scourged back and thorn-crowned head, his face swollen and disfigured by the buffeting of cowards; he seemed unable to go farther with the cross they had compelled him to carry. The centurion was anxious to be done with the repulsive work he had been commissioned to do, and was therefore impatient of any delay. Seeing a man, Simon of Cyrene, approaching the city gate, he asked him to carry the cross of Jesus. This he did without hesitation, and the jeering and scoffing mob continued to move toward Calvary.

Calvary.—The place determined for the greatest tragedy in human history was a skull-shaped elevation outside of the city wall on the north. The name of the place was Calvary in Latin, and Golgotha in Hebrew.

No one can understand the awful agony that filled Jesus' soul as he heard the soldiers drive their picks into the hard earth. The sneering and jeering mob had tasted blood and were increasing their scoffing and torment. His disciples had left him. He had been condemned to die. The soldiers were

already adjusting the wooden cross for his execution. This, however, was the goal of his ministry on earth. His work was finished. No more illness to heal. No more blind eyes to open. No more sermons to preach. No more hungry wonder-seekers to feed. His journey was ended.

Weakened by the pain from the crown of thorns and his recent flogging, Jesus watched his assassins complete their preparations. Although every blow of the hammer and every thump of the pick reached his soul with a sickening thud, yet, with infinite pity and compassion, he looked into their misguided and deluded souls and offered the most sublime prayer that ever came before the throne of God, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Concerning the shallow things of earth, these murderers were not ignorant men. Among their number were the learned scribes of the temple, the dark-cloaked doctors of divinity, and the interpreters of the law. In the spiritual zone, however, their souls were as dark as night. Jesus had taught throughout all Galilee and Judaea. He had explained his messages by parables and reinforced them with miracles. They did not understand because they would not learn. They had closed their eyes to the visions he presented and they had stopped their ears to his words of wisdom.

He Saved Others.—At last the awful moment came. The soldiers being spurred to faster work by the jeering crowd, approached Jesus and removed his clothing. It was the Roman custom to remove all clothing from the victim before crucifixion. He was then placed on the cross. Willingly he extended his hands to the soldier who was ready with hammer and nails. A hushed stillness seemed to fall upon the railing mob. These blood-thirsty God-killers expected some cry of anguish, some struggle of resistance, and some murmur of pain. They wanted to miss nothing that would gratify their morbid craving for blood. They were disappointed. No murmur, no cry, and no struggle came from the divine Son of God as the soldiers ruthlessly drove the nails into the quivering flesh of his hands and feet.

Jesus had refused the stupefying drink which had been graciously offered the three victims by the soldiers. He needed no help and he desired no alleviation from the suffering he must bear in a full atonement for the sins of humanity.

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Rudely the soldiers lifted the cross and dropped it into the hole which had been dug to receive it. A mocking and derisive cry, as from the depths of hell, rang out from the throats of the jeering mob. "He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God." Truly he had saved others.

Before them, supported by four gaping wounds, was their Messiah, the Deliverer of their people, who had been promised by the prophets for two thousand years; the King of the Jews, and the King of Kings. The chief priests and Jewish rulers were satisfied. The chief priests could continue their influence unmolested, the egotistic Pharisees could again conceal their hypocrisy, and spineless Pilate could retain his office.

Jesus had gone through agony and torture willingly, had allowed his hands and feet to be nailed to the cross, and was about to die without fault, without stain, without guilt, and without sin, that those who believe on him, even those who were scoffing at his suffering, might inherit immortal happiness and eternal life.

Remember Me.—The two thieves who were crucified with Jesus were not novices in crime. They had been hardened by years of sin. They had joined with the crowd in jeering at the buffeted and lacerated King of the Jews. But when Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," a responsive note was struck in the soul of one of them. What did it mean? It was not familiar language, and yet there seemed to be some far-off spirit calling to him. Sins do not harmonize with the memories of childhood.

"In that instant, o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seem'd to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears
Such moment pours the grief of years."

He was carried back in memory, probably to a mother's prayer as she knelt by his bedside in the shadows of night. He had been arrested many times, tried and convicted. He knew the verdicts had been just. He also knew he was about to appear before a Judge whose sentence would be com-

mensurate with his guilt and whose decision would not only be final but eternal. Encouraged by the conviction that his companion in suffering was the King of the Jews and the Son of God, he turned his pain-distorted face toward Jesus and said, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." The sympathetic and merciful soul of Jesus was touched by this tardy but sincere expression of the sinner's faith. "And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The Virgin Mother.—"But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home."

The rabble and the mob had gone. Their thirst for blood had been satisfied. A few soldiers remained to guard the victims until death could soothe their rasping nerves and still their twitching, writhing muscles. The mother of Jesus, however, could not leave. The power that stimulated her prayers even before Jesus had been placed in her arms in the stable at Bethlehem, and the faith that had controlled her thoughts and calmed her sorrows, held her in the presence of her crucified Son. A mother is always faithful to the end.

"Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall:
A mother's secret hope outlives them all."

The End.—Jesus had been on the cross for almost three hours. The vitality of his human body was almost gone. The last slender thread of life was about to break. The jeering of the noisy crowd had ceased. He seemed so utterly alone. Clouds of human sin for which he was making atonement seemed to have darkened even his heavenly Father's face. When the guards thought death had put an end to his suffering, they were startled by a cry that came from the depths of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The silence was soon again broken by a faint and pitiful wail, "I thirst." One of the soldiers took a sponge, dipped it in vinegar, and in the spirit of human pity, offered it to Jesus. "When Jesus therefore had received the

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vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit."

Little wonder is it that "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom," that the earth quaked, that huge rocks were torn asunder, and that tombs were opened as the spirit of the Christ broke away from its human bonds. Little wonder is it that the centurion guard was terrified and with quivering lips and a trembling voice exclaimed, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

More than nineteen hundred years have passed since this confession of the Roman soldier started on its journey down through the centuries. During this time men have hated the Jesus who was crucified on Calvary, men have loved him with a consecrated devotion, but no man has ever ignored him. In the economy of life and in the realm of the spirit, he is an important factor with whom all must reckon. Men who are broken-hearted, men to whom all seems lost and the future is gloomy and dark, and men who come close to the edge of life and look death in the face, reach outward and upward for the divine Son of God who was crucified on Calvary to make men free. No man, however sinful, ever came to him with sincerity of purpose and was disappointed.

The Burial.—It was considered improper that executed criminals should remain on the cross during the Sabbath (Saturday). The bodies of the two thieves were therefore removed during the twilight hours of Friday, the day of the execution, and buried in a common grave for criminals. A man from Arimathaea, Joseph by name, had received permission from Pilate to bury the body of Jesus. He, assisted by Nicodemus and the few women who remained on Calvary Hill, took his wounded and disfigured body down from the cross and buried it in Joseph's private tomb. Tender and loving hands washed the blood-stained body that had been desecrated by hostile blows, removed the cruel nails and piercing thorns, and anointed it with perfume and spices for burial.

Joseph and Nicodemus were members of the Sanhedrin. They had not consented to Jesus's death by their presence at any of the meetings held for his trial and condemnation. They were able to make a negative confession but they were not willing to defend him openly nor were they willing to stand when the count was taken.

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

"They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak.
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

They desired, however, to pacify their sorrow and lessen their remorse by showing Jesus a kindly consideration in his burial.

QUESTIONS

1. Does an effort to find an excuse for conduct always indicate sin?
2. Can all individuals be assured of success if they fearlessly follow the road of duty?
3. Why did Pilate intentionally violate the wishes of the Jews by the inscription he dictated for Jesus' cross?
4. Does the fact that Jesus was unable to bear his cross suggest that he was subnormal in his physical parts?
5. (a) Did the fact that Jesus was divine affect in any way his physical and mental suffering?
(b) Did he probably suffer more during his crucifixion than either of the two thieves? Explain.
6. Why was the crucifixion of Jesus and the two criminals not postponed until after the great crowd had returned home from the feast?
7. Name two prominent effects of such a public spectacle as the crucifixion.
8. Did the consciences of the chief priests and rulers of the Jews probably annoy them as they returned to the city after the crucifixion?
9. On what basis was the thief able to secure from Jesus the promise of salvation and immortal life?
10. If Nicodemus and Joseph were unwilling to defend Jesus, what motive prompted them to show any consideration for him after his death?

LESSON 30

The Resurrection

Text: Matthew 27:62-66, 27:1-15; Mark 16:1-11;
Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18.

Discouragement.—When Jesus died, few of his followers retained hope concerning the future of his kingdom. Many of them had expected he would free them from Roman domination. The miraculous power he had shown, and the fame he had secured in both Galilee and Judaea, encouraged the Jews to believe he was their Deliverer. They had heralded him as King as he entered Jerusalem. Some of his disciples had entertained hope for official positions in the kingdom he would establish. Their hopes were blighted when he died. They had seen him cast out demons and raise the dead. Why could he not, by using the same power, confound and disperse his enemies? Why did he submit to torture and insolence? Why did he die? These and many other similar questions must have puzzled the disciples of Jesus as they went into retirement to adjust themselves to the new order.

Prophecy and Expectation.—The resurrection of Jesus had been prophesied. Jesus himself had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." No one, however, understood the full meaning of this prophecy. Consequently, no one expected to see him alive again, certainly not within three days. Even his tormentors and murderers were certain they had disposed of him forever. Some of the chief priests, however, remembered that it had been rumored he would rise from the dead. They suspected his disciples might steal his body from the tomb and report that the prophecy concerning his resurrection had been fulfilled.

They determined to take no chances. They therefore not only sealed the tomb in which he had been buried, but detailed a guard of soldiers to watch it. As well might they have tried to reverse the rivers in their course and to hold the sun at the zenith, as to imprison the divine Son of God against his will.

The Stone Rolled Away.—On Friday night the body of Jesus being partially embalmed by loving hands, had been placed in the private vault of Joseph of Arimathaea. This tomb was located in a garden near to the place of crucifixion. A great stone had been securely placed at the entrance of the tomb and later sealed by Roman authority. Here it remained until the morning of the third day, which is our Sabbath. Saturday being the Jewish Sabbath, no further work in embalming Jesus' body could be done. However, during the early hours of the third morning, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, that they might come and anoint him." They expected to find his body in the tomb. They had not even thought of any other possibility. Their only concern was to remove the great stone which barred their entrance to the sepulchre, and which had been securely sealed by Roman authority at the request of the Jewish rulers.

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said."

Fear, wonder, surprise, and doubt must have filled the minds of these loyal and expectant women as they held their spices and looked into the empty tomb. The brain is stunned and the voice is silent in the presence of what, to the human mind, seems an impossibility. Could there be any solution to this mystery? Was this a vision they saw? Had some malicious vandal stolen the sacred body of their friend? Could they dare to hope that the words they had just heard were true and that their Master and Lord would be restored to them? They believed in the resurrection of the dead at the last day, but they were unprepared for a miracle that

would return to life the man whom they had seen crucified, but three days before, on Calvary. The command of the angel encouraged their hopes, "Go quickly, and tell his disciples, he is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you unto Galilee; there shall ye see him."

The resurrection of Jesus is no fairy story, or weird imagination of some fanciful brain. These women were awake. They were not dreaming. The Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb were not merely acting a part. They had come face to face with an act of divinity. It was fitting they should tremble. It was the only thing they could do.

The Disciples Informed.—The surprise which came to these loyal women was only surpassed by the unbelief of the disciples when they were first told that Jesus had risen. Unbelief, however, was changed to amazement, amazement to wonder, and wonder to a joyful hope, as Peter and John hastened to the tomb to verify what the women had told them. When they reached the tomb, "they saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home."

A peculiar mental unrest comes to the human mind when it collides with a startling fact not easily understood. Peter and John had no desire to express their amazement or utter any denial as they inspected the empty tomb in which Jesus had been buried. Their confusion of mind took them back to their home. No place is more appropriate for the solution of perplexing problems or for calming the troubled mind than the atmosphere of home.

These disciples probably reviewed in memory all of the great experiences they had shared with Jesus prior to his crucifixion. They had heard his Sermon on the Mount, they had been with him in the chamber of death, they had seen him cast out demons, they had been with him on the sacred Mount of Transfiguration, and they had heard him say he was the Son of God.

If he was what he claimed to be and what Peter himself had confessed he was, was it incredible that he should rise from the dead? If he was a God, did he not have power over death? If he had raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and had brought back to life a man who had been dead four days, was it not

a little thing for him to break the seal of the Roman guard?

A careful and thoughtful consideration of what these disciples had seen and heard, probably brought back to their minds Jesus' statement concerning himself, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up."

Such meditations and many subsequent experiences led the disciples to a firm conviction that Jesus had fulfilled his own prophecy.

When the grave visitors had gone, Mary Magdalene tarried in the garden. Her mind was confused concerning what had happened. It seemed so incredible to her that Jesus was not in the tomb. As she stood there weeping, "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?" Not recognizing the one who addressed her, she told him the cause of her sorrow. When Jesus, however, called her name, she knew him, and went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord.

The Sanhedrin Informed.—When the soldiers who had been commissioned to guard the tomb recovered their senses and carefully considered the possible consequences of what had happened, they feared for their own safety. They had been made responsible for the body of Jesus. It had disappeared and the tomb was empty. Instead of going to the Roman authorities, they went to some of the influential members of the Sanhedrin. When these elders had counselled with each other, they adopted deception as the only method of concealing the supreme victory of Jesus and, at the same time, covering their own ignominious defeat. They therefore, "gave much money unto the soldiers, Saying, say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care." This lie was persistently distributed among the Jews and continues to be accepted by many of them as fact. The numerous appearances of Jesus after he came from the tomb, and to those who knew him well, confirmed the fact of the resurrection in the minds of all his followers.

The resurrection of Jesus continues to be one of the great-

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est factors of the Christian's faith and the greatest promise and assurance of immortality.

"Immortality o'ersweeps all pains,
All tears, all time, all fears, and peals
Like the eternal thunder of the deep
Into my ears this truth:
Thou livest forever!"

QUESTIONS

1. Name two possible motives which took the disciples into retirement immediately after Jesus' crucifixion.
2. Why did the resurrection so thoroughly surprise the disciples?
3. Did the placing of a guard at the tomb indicate an expectation on the part of the chief rulers that Jesus would miraculously come from the tomb and live again?
4. Why should the chief rulers be willing to pay money to the soldiers?
5. Did any evidence exist which prompted the chief rulers to suspect the disciples might steal the body of Jesus?
6. What was probably the predominant thought in the minds of the disciples concerning Jesus when they were convinced he had risen?
7. What had the chief rulers of the Jews to fear from the resurrection of Jesus?
8. State three important values which attach to the fact of Jesus' resurrection.

LESSON 31

Post-Mortem Appearances of Jesus

Text: Luke 24: 13-34; John 20: 13-18; Matthew 28: 8-10;
First Corinthians 15: 5; John 20: 19-24, 26-19, 21: 1-24;
Matthew 28: 16-20; First Corinthians 15: 7; Luke 24:
33-53.

1. **To Mary Magdalene.**—It was no small honor to be the first to see the resurrected Christ. The variegated record of Mary's sin and the gracious sympathy of Jesus in cleansing her life, had clarified her vision to see her Master in the pure light of a conscious redemption. In strict adherence to formal ceremonies, no blind worship of traditional customs, and no egotistic show of inflated goodness, prompted Mary Magdalene to say, as she stood at the empty tomb, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She merely revealed by this statement the surface of a sincere devotion to her Master. What she was and what she hoped to be, she owed to Jesus, whose dead body she now sought to reverence, but was unable to find. Disappointed and sorrowful, she turned to leave the garden when immediately before her she "beholdeth Jesus standing." After a brief and sacred interview with her Master, she hastened to the disciples and said, "I have seen the Lord."

Happy is that individual who is able to make such a statement. (John 20: 13-18.)

2. **To the Women.**—When the women who had been early visitors to the tomb were returning to inform the disciples, "Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him." These women were intimate friends of Jesus. They knew him when

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they saw him, but they were amazed to see him alive again. Jesus anticipated their unsettled state of mind by saying, "Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart unto Galilee, and there shall they see me." (Matthew 28:8-10.)

3. **To Peter.**—Nothing is known of the circumstances surrounding the Master's appearance to Peter. It is not surprising, however, that Jesus should appear to the disciple who probably had been his closest companion, the one who had walked on the Lake of Galilee to meet him, the one who was with him in the death chamber at the home of Jairus, the one who, while in his companionship, had caught a glimpse of eternal glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, the one who was with him in the garden of Gethsemane, the one who used his sword to defend his Master at the gate of the garden, the one who denied him three times but who immediately cleared his account with bitter tears of repentance, and the one who confessed before his crucifixion that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Luke 24:34; First Corinthians 15:5.)

4. **To Two Disciples.**—On that memorable Easter Sabbath, Jesus also appeared to two of his disciples on their way to Emmaus, a small town seven and one-half miles from Jerusalem. They were discussing the fact of his crucifixion, death, and resurrection, when he joined them and proceeded with them to the village. During their conversation, Jesus, unrecognized by them, reproached them for their dullness of mind and inability to interpret prophecy touching both the suffering and subsequent glorification of Jesus.

The stranger interested these two disciples to such a degree that they persuaded him to stop with them in Emmaus for their evening meal. After blessing the bread and giving it to them, they suddenly recognized him as the risen Lord about whom they had been talking. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." An embarrassed state of mind always comes to the individual who unconsciously discusses another while in his company.

"And they said one to another, was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way." (Luke 24:13-33.)

5. **To Ten Disciples.**—On the evening of the day Jesus came from the grave, ten of his disciples could have been found in a private room with the doors locked. Thomas,

despondent and discouraged, was not present. They had not only concealed themselves for fear of the Jews, but that they might clear their own minds before they discussed his resurrection outside of their selected group. Many questions must have been asked in this private conference. Could some of the antagonistic Jewish leaders have stolen the body of Jesus? If they had stolen it, what was their motive? Was it that they might more securely guard against a possible resurrection, or did they want to further scourge and mutilate his sacred body? Could it be possible that his miraculous power might also extend to a control over his own death? If he had power to rise from the dead, why had he submitted to ridicule, torment, and a cruel crucifixion? If he had risen, did he plan to establish his Kingdom at once and deliver the Jews from foreign oppression? Had he not told them he must suffer and die but that on the third day he would rise again?

To all of these questions no answer could be given except the testimony of a few of their number that they had seen him alive only a few hours before.

As doubt, wonder, and joy perplexed the minds of the disciples, Jesus suddenly appeared in the room with them and said, "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Having shown them his wounded hands and feet and his pierced side, he disappeared from them as suddenly as he had come. (John 20: 19-24.)

6. To Eleven Disciples.—One week following Jesus' appearance to the ten disciples, he appeared to them while again they counselled with each other behind locked doors. On this occasion Thomas was present. Although all of them had seen him alive except Thomas, yet their slow minds could not easily accept his resurrection as a fact. No human mind can understand miracles. Human intelligence cannot analyze the mysteries of God. They knew he had died on a certain Friday, and they had seen him alive on the following Sabbath. Such were the facts. It seemed impossible, however, for some of them to accept the facts even when their own eyes had testified to the truth. Thomas, who had not seen his risen Lord, not only refused to believe the report of the resurrection, but refused to accept the combined testimony of his companions who had seen him. "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my

finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

To this group of faithful, yet puzzled, friends, Jesus suddenly appeared and addressed Thomas, saying, "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

Many people have doubted concerning the resurrection of Jesus. They have questioned the jurisdiction of his kingdom and the necessity of obedience to his law. All of these, sooner or later, are forced by the laws of the universe and of life to exclaim with doubting Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

When undeniable facts had removed the doubt in the soul of Thomas, he was greeted by those significant words of Jesus, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20: 26-29.)

7. To Seven Disciples.—The disciples had been advised by Jesus to go out and preach his message to the people. He had also told them to remain in Jerusalem until they should be qualified in spirit for their work. Prior to the Feast of Pentecost, when they expected the promised endowment of the Spirit, Peter suggested that he would return for a time to his vocation as a fisherman. Many of the disciples went with him. After an unsuccessful night on the Lake of Galilee, they noticed a stranger standing on the shore. "And he said unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord." Having followed the directions of Jesus, they took one hundred fifty-three fishes and at once started for the shore, which was about one hundred yards distant. When they had made a fire and had cooked and eaten some of the fish which they had caught, Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" As Peter answered, "Yea, Lord," his mind must have recalled a previous personal conversation with Jesus in which he had said he would die for his Master before he would forsake him. He also remembered that very soon thereafter, beside a similar fire, he had denied that he ever knew his Lord. Peter had learned by sad experience that

"There is an aching that is worse than any pain."

The question was repeated. Three times Peter, not willing to state his own personal conviction, answered, "Thou knowest that I love thee."

When a firm belief had become stamped on Peter's soul that he loved his Master and could trust him for all time, Jesus revealed to him some of the problems and hardships that would surely come to him during the following days. Peter knew that Jesus had chosen to come into the world to suffer and die for such as he. It was such a choice Jesus was returning to him. He could again deny his Master, go back to his nets, provide food and shelter for himself and family for a few years by selling fish, and at last come before the Judge of all the earth with empty hands and a fearful soul. He could also accept the responsibility Jesus offered him, meet persecution, insolence, imprisonment, possibly death, and in the next world a glorious eternity.

He chose, and he chose with wisdom. In the great sum of all time this pin's-point of our earthly life is but a moment, and the passing of a shadow. He that is faithful in the few things God has commissioned him to do will receive a reward in the heavenly kingdom which is worthy of the Father's love. Jesus made clear to Peter, and to all who are willing to learn, that only one safe formula and guide will shield from harm and bring final success when he said, "Follow me." No one has ever followed Jesus with regret. (John 21: 1-24.)

8. **To five Hundred.**—The disciples had been advised concerning the work they were to do. They had received specific instruction concerning what they were to teach. They had been sent out on a trial mission to test their ability. Jesus, however, from motives of personal affection and to remove whatever of discouragement may have come to them as a result of his crucifixion, appointed a time and place in Galilee for another personal conference with them. The place selected was probably Mount Tabor. At the appointed time Jesus met the eleven disciples and more than five hundred other followers who were devoted to him.

Under conditions similar to those in which he preached his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke to them words of counsel and promise. "And when they saw him, they wor-

shipped him: but some doubted." Doubt does not indicate antagonism. It suggests faith. The most faithful souls have had their moments of doubt. Jesus' words to them were intended to meet the spiritual uncertainty which existed in their souls. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

No address could have included more. A commission for service, whether it be in the realm of the physical or in the zone of the spiritual, must involve three essential factors.

1. The commission must come with authority. Jesus said that all authority in heaven and on the earth was committed to him.

2. Specific directions must be given. His command was to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach all nations to obey all of his commandments.

3. Equipment for the service must be assured. It was sufficient for Jesus to say, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

No one could misunderstand his message and no one need fear for results with Jesus as a constant companion.

This commission and this promise have given inspiration and courage to every believer who has sought to do the will of God. (Matthew 28:16-20.)

9. **To James.**—That Jesus should appear to James individually attaches interest to a traditional story that this particular disciple had made a vow immediately after the last supper not to eat nor drink until he had seen his risen Lord. (First Corinthians 15:7.)

10. **To the Disciples.**—The farewell day had come. Jesus had been on the earth forty days since his resurrection. He had appeared nine times to those who had known him well. They had not only seen him, but they had touched him with their hands and had eaten with him. No more substantial evidence of his resurrection could have been given. On this, his last day on earth, Jesus met his disciples and others gathered with them in Jerusalem. When he had shown them his wounded hands and feet to satisfy them again of his identity, and to remove the fright which had

come over them, he said, "Ye are my witnesses of these things. And behold I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."

Jesus then led his disciples from Jerusalem along the familiar road to the Mount of Olives. Here, in a secluded place, he spoke his farewell words to his friends. A feeling of sadness mingled with joy must have filled the souls of this selected group as they looked at their Lord and Master for what they probably considered was the last time on earth. All separations involve an element of sadness. The friendship of true companions is sacred and leaves a dull pain of loneliness when it is severed.

"When I remember something which I had,
But which is gone, and I must do without,
I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
Even in cowslip time when hedges sprout;
It makes me sigh to think on it,—but yet
My days will not be better days, should I forget."

Tears probably came into the eyes of Peter as he recalled the insolence which had crowded in upon his Master during that awful night in the judgment hall of Caiaphas. His tears, however, were not the bitter tears he had shed when, in the courtyard at Jerusalem, he had heard the cock crow, but tears of love and devotion for his friend and Lord who was about to leave him.

John, the youngest and the one whom Jesus probably loved most, would soon be lonely in his melancholy joy. Lonely because he had leaned heavily upon his Master for counsel and courage. Not only Peter and John, but all of the disciples must have been depressed in spirit but inspired by the thought that Jesus, whether in heaven or on the earth, would continue to be attentive to their prayers. They remembered his messages and promises and probably repeated his last promise when doubt, persecution, and discouragement later crowded in upon them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

"And it came to pass, when he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven."

The promise is given that he will come again. "Watch

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therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh."
(Luke 24: 33-53.)

QUESTIONS

1. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be crucified?
2. Name three individuals in Bible history who passed into the next world without dying.
3. Why should any of the disciples be frightened when Jesus appeared among them after his resurrection?
4. Did Peter forfeit any claim to Jesus' affection and consideration by his three denials?
5. What plan concerning Jesus probably controlled the efforts of the leading Jews after his resurrection?
6. Does any human attitude toward Jesus in modern days suggest the doubt that existed in the minds of the disciples concerning his resurrection?
7. Name three definite results accomplished by Jesus' ministry on earth.
8. What life plan must be followed by anyone who would intelligently accept the plan of redemption which Jesus came into the world to offer?
9. What is meant by the atonement?
10. When may an individual be assured he has met the conditions of salvation?

LESSON 32

Sin

Text: Psalms 38:18; Matthew 26:69-75, 27: 3-5; First John 1:9.

Nature of Sin.—The purpose of any religion is to present a program of life which will develop a correct attitude toward God and establish the proper relationship between individuals. Anything which defeats this purpose or hampers its operation is sin.

The fibre and quality of any life is shown by the way the individual meets sin. If sin were impossible, character would be negative and virtue would have no meaning. God could not be honored if individuals were not free to choose between obedience and disobedience.

The greatest achievement in human life rests solely on the ability and willingness of individuals to meet successfully their daily problems. The wise solution of these problems will be possible only when the individual's soul is fortified by a firm faith in God, and a spiritual intelligence which will enable him to distinguish between right and wrong. His habits of thought and conduct must be ready to respond in harmony with his best judgment.

Meeting Sin.—All individuals have standards of life which determine their conduct. All must meet sin. These standards consciously or unconsciously develop from an early age. The sights that are seen, the sounds that are heard, the books that are read, and the people whose counsel is accepted, are responsible for the monitors that are erected in human life and that henceforth determine choices.

Some men pull down their barns and build greater ones. Afterward, they eat, drink, and try to be merry. God suddenly closed the accounts of a certain man who had been so foolish.

Some men meet their problems with a Spartan stoicism that promises success. The Record reports that "the end thereof are the ways of death."

Some men resort to the isolation of the hermit's life, convinced that to learn is merely to develop crannies in the brain where misery lodges.

All of these efforts, without one single exception, stand forth confessed failures. All alike learn when they reach the edge of life, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit," but all have not learned what Solomon knew, when he said that to fear God and keep his commandments was the whole duty of man. The only road which leads to the greatest happiness is traveled by those whose lives are controlled by the spirit which Jesus brought into the world, and whose road-book is the word of God.

Judas Met Sin.—When Jesus selected his twelve disciples, the roads to righteousness and sin continued to remain open to each of them. They were free to choose.

Judas, the only disciple from hostile Judaea, probably came from an environment which contributed little to his spiritual life. His association with Jesus of Nazareth had brought to him the sneers and scoffs of his home friends. His avaricious soul had been fertile soil for the growth of infidelity and disloyalty. He did not use wisely the opportunities afforded him for the development of spiritual power and the larger life. He had nursed his doubts and had refused to culture his faith. He was, therefore, ready to fall when temptation came.

The half-excuses Judas was able to collect, and the evil influence of associates with whom he had grown to manhood, rendered it possible for him to make his contract with the chief priests to betray the Son of God. Although his conscience daily cried itself to sleep and the sympathetic words of his Master contained no complaining note, Judas, the arch-fiend of history, came into the upper room for the last Passover as a spy, a traitor, and an assassin. The words of life his Lord had spoken on many occasions kept echoing through his brain and the thirty pieces of silver in his pocket kept tugging at his soul, yet, with his eyes wide open, he refused to leave the road which was rapidly leading him down to ruin and despair. Judas had been taught from Jesus' own lips the vital principles of the kingdom of

heaven and had received specific directions for the control of his own life, yet he left the upper room and the companionship of his only Saviour and went out into the darkness of the night.

Judas did not hate Jesus. He had not been wronged by his Master. No political position or place of honor was at stake. No religious belief was questioned. No patriotic or personal motive urged him on. In the absence of all motives of personal vengeance, and without the urge which takes many murderers to their bloody work, he trampled underfoot all counsel, all ethics, all devotion, all reverence, all honesty, all self-respect, and not only betrayed with a kiss the man who called him *friend*, but sold him to his enemies; sold him as cattle are sold, not for work but for slaughter; and sold him for a few small silver coins.

When Judas learned that Jesus had been sentenced to be crucified, a new vision came to him. Nothing except death itself can illumine the motives of the human soul like the news of a ghastly crime. In recent days, strong men have thought silently and deeply when the details of a horrible deed are flashed before their eyes in the daily press. Motives in human life are revealed by the weird light which is thus thrown on the human soul.

The fact that he had severed his friendships, strangled prayer, and sold his God, drove Judas back to the buyers of his Master's blood. With a shriek that came from a remorseful soul, he threw the money down at his tempters' feet and cried, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood." A sneer and a few scornful words was their only reply. Driven from regret to sorrow, from sorrow to remorse, and from remorse to desperation, he hurried out to the rim of the city and there, on a blackened tree near where the offal of the city was thrown, he hung himself. The stench of the city's refuse and the waiting buzzards that watched him from the air above, seemed to harmonize with the tragedy of his doom.

"So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like scorpions girt by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death."

Peter Met Sin.—Peter was rough in his personality, slow in his mental processes, and impulsive in his devotion. Jesus found it necessary to explain many of his parables to Peter, who was as ready to listen as he was eager to ask questions when he did not understand. Until after the resurrection, the kingdom of heaven was to Peter but a vague control of the Jewish people, half political and half material. A kingdom of the spirit was outside of Peter's conception or imagination. The Messiah, promised by the prophets, marked the highest point in his thinking.

Peter's appreciation of the fitness of things was dull and crude. When Peter, on the Mount of Transfiguration, approached as close to the gates of heaven as was ever permitted to humankind, he fell asleep. When he awakened, his greatest interest was not focused on visions of celestial glory, but showed itself in a desire to build houses with stone and wood. He also fell asleep in the garden of Gethsemane after the last supper with his Master, after Jesus had told him that before the cock should crow twice he would deny him three times, and after he had told his Lord that he was ready to go with him to prison and to death, if necessary. Opposed to such an attitude, it may be said that Judas and the chief priests were never more alert than at this moment.

In Peter's nature was a mixture of bravery and cowardice. Few men would have attempted to walk on the surface of Lake Galilee, even to meet Jesus. No other disciple offered to defend his Master with the sword at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane. This bravery left him, however, in the presence of a young girl, when he denied that he ever knew Jesus.

Judas, in a group of hostile enemies, sold his Master to eager buyers who had probably encouraged him in his crime. Peter, in the presence of his Lord, denied that he ever knew him, and, stimulated by the questions of a disinterested maid, confirmed his denial with an oath.

Regardless of his mental stupidity, notwithstanding his failure to properly estimate the true nature of Christ's kingdom, and in the face of the fact that he had repeatedly denied his Lord, he went out of the judgment hall in response to Jesus' look, fell on his knees before God, and bared his sin-stained soul in the agony of regret. His con-

fession, his bitter tears of repentance, and his subsequent faith and obedience, have qualified him as a fit foundation stone for the Christian Church and have placed his name among the immortals of all ages.

No better formula has been given for meeting sin.

“Habitual evils change not on a sudden,
But many days must pass, and many sorrows;
Conscious remorse, and anguish must be felt,
To curb desire, to break the stubborn will
And work a second nature in the soul
Ere Virtue can resume the plan she lost.”

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

QUESTIONS

1. How may an individual distinguish between what is right and what is wrong?
2. Do standards of righteousness change?
3. Can an act or thought be inherently wrong, or does its sinful nature depend on man's association with others in a human society?
4. Name two specific and concrete results of sin.
5. Does the fear of being “found out,” which leads to the turning away from acts of sin, constitute repentance?
6. What did Lew Wallace mean by the following:
“Repentance must be something more than mere remorse for sin: it comprehends a change of nature befitting heaven.”
7. Name three ways of preventing sin.
8. What does repentance involve?
9. What probably hindered Judas from repenting of his sin? Did his returning the pieces of silver constitute repentance?
10. What value attaches to penance?
11. How may the sincerity of Peter's repentance be determined?
12. Why do some people fail to repent of their sin?

LESSON 33

Paul

Text: Acts 7:58, 9:1-30, 13:1-4; Galatians 1:15-18;
Second Corinthians 11:32.

A Great Church Leader.—Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were written by Paul, the most enthusiastic, the most scholarly, the most capable, the most fearless, and the most efficient leader of the early Christian Church. No man is more frequently named by Bible students or Bible teachers than the Apostle Paul.

His Early Life.—Paul had the distinction of being a Roman as well as a Jew. Among his Jewish friends he was known by the name of Saul, prior to his work as preacher to the Gentiles. This was the name given him by his Jewish parents. Saul's father was a Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin, and had become a Roman citizen. His home was in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia. Here Saul learned his trade as a tent-maker. Every Jewish boy, regardless of the wealth of his parents, was expected to learn a trade. Tarsus was noted for its schools of Greek literature. This fact enabled Saul to learn Greek philosophy and to speak fluently the Greek language. While he was yet a young man, his family moved to Jerusalem. Saul's education was completed under the instruction of Gamaliel, who was a grandson of the great Hillel and probably the most eminent doctor of the law in Jerusalem.

During the vigorous growth of Christian doctrine which was marked by the work of Stephen and the appointment of seven men to care for certain business interests of the Church, Saul was an energetic antagonist of all who sought to promote the Christian faith. When Stephen met a cruel

death at the hands of his persecutors, Saul guarded the garments of those who threw the stones.

Saul's Conversion.—Some men have looked into the face of death at such close range or have so keenly felt the correcting power of the Holy Spirit, that they have suddenly torn down the barriers which separated their souls from God. Saul was one of these.

Among those who annoyed and harassed the teachers of the Christian doctrine, Saul was most prominent. "And Saul laid waste the Church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women, committed them to prison." He was soon to learn that no man can long continue to fight against the living God.

Armed with warrants from the high priest for the arrest of those whom he found teaching the doctrine of the Christ, he started for Damascus. He had almost reached the city when suddenly a great light from heaven flashed upon him, he fell to the earth, and a voice spoke to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad."

The goads placed behind oxen as they were being driven were intended to stimulate their forward movement. Any attempt on the part of the irritated animals to kick against these goads only caused the goads to pierce deeper. Many individuals since Saul's time have repeatedly experienced an urge or pull which tended to lead them in the way of God's will. It is not only wise but disastrous to repel or coerce such influences. Saul did it until he met God on the Damascus road. He had sufficient wisdom to confound the scholarly Jews, he had the enthusiasm of a leader, and he had the courage of a warrior, but he was powerless from fear when he found himself in the presence of his God.

Little wonder he trembled when he said, "Who art thou, Lord?" To this direct question a voice replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

Saul in Damascus.—Saul recognized the voice of God and obeyed. When he arose from the ground, Saul was blind and was unable to see for three days. In Damascus was a Christian, named Judas, to whose home Saul was taken by his companions. In the same city was also a Christian named Ananias, to whom God gave specific directions

concerning Saul. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth."

Ananias, like the prophet Jonah, did not welcome the instructions God had given him. He had heard of this man Saul, and had probably used every precaution to keep out of his way. He was certainly not interested in making a special effort to find him. The human vision is blurred when eternal facts are to be seen. Man does not see as God sees. Jonah learned that when God gives a command, he means to have it obeyed. Ananias also learned this truth when, after considerable protest by Ananias, God said, "Go thy way."

Ananias obeyed.

The mind of Saul was cleared of many perplexing questions concerning his future work when Ananias appeared before him in the home of Judas and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou comest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately Saul not only received his physical sight, but a great and vivid vision of his life purpose was revealed to him. "And he arose and was baptized."

Readjustment of Life.—It is not easy for anyone to make a transition in his life such as Saul made. It is difficult to reverse our direction when going at high speed. It was not easy for Saul. He must now refute the beliefs and condemn the policies of those who had followed him but yesterday, it seemed, in his attack on the followers of Jesus.

It is always foolish for a tourist to persist in his course when he has become convinced he is traveling the wrong road. The return road may be long and tortuous, but mistakes must be corrected. Peter corrected his life and received the great reward, although it cost him many bitter tears. Judas, the traitor, refused to change his course and he went down to his death in the darkness of a hopeless despair. Saul revised his life program in the home of Judas in Damascus, accepted God's plan, and, with an approving conscience, was able to keep the faith.

Saul's Work Begun.—When Ananias baptized Saul and

received him into the Church, the new convert began immediately to proclaim Jesus in the Synagogue. The fame of Saul as a persecutor of Christians, his ability and the enthusiasm he had shown in his work, and the report of his sudden conversion must have attached great interest in what he had to preach. This work he continued in Damascus until he went into retirement in Arabia. Here, probably in sight of Mount Sinai, where God gave the law to Moses, Saul reviewed his former life and brought it into full harmony with the will of God. Not only Saul, but Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist, used the solitude of God's great university to learn the divine plan and to adjust their lives to the complete control of his will.

Saul at Jerusalem.—When Saul returned from Arabia to Damascus, his preaching so aroused the anger of the Jews that they threatened his life. So eager were they to destroy him that they established guards at the gates of the city to prevent his escape. Saul, becoming convinced of the wisdom of leaving Damascus, was let down over the city wall by his fellow apostles and escaped to Jerusalem.

An embarrassing experience, however, came to him when he arrived in Jerusalem. The disciples were afraid of him. Well might they fear the man who, but three years before, had threatened anyone who spoke favorably of the Nazarene. After considerable effort to adjust this strained relationship, Barnabas vouched for Paul to the apostles and Church in Jerusalem. He had probably received definite information concerning Saul's conversion and had confirmed this information by the work Saul had done in Damascus.

The work of the new convert in Jerusalem was not commonplace. His education in the Greek schools at Tarsus and his superior native ability qualified him to speak convincingly to the influential Grecian Jews in Jerusalem. Again they answered his preaching by threats, and again Saul was forced to flee if his life was to be prolonged.

Saul at Antioch.—The dangers to which Saul had been subjected since his conversion and the threats which had been made on his life, probably caused Saul to wonder at times whether or not he had made a wise decision in transferring his allegiance and interest from the work endorsed by the leading Pharisees and chief priests to the work of preaching the message of the crucified Jesus. Similar

thoughts have come to all Christians when the pleasures and interests of the world are placed in contrast with the discouragements, misunderstanding, and criticism which must surely come to him who, with a consecrated and honest motive, strives to do God's will in an atmosphere of sin. Such doubts, however, must always disappear when the end is seriously considered. Transient pleasure of a superficial sort has little weight when intelligently compared with the consciousness of duty well performed and the assurance of a glorious eternity.

When Paul left Jerusalem, he went to Caesarea and then to his native city of Tarsus. The spirit of antagonism against the work of the apostles, which led to the death of Stephen, had driven many of the Christian leaders from Jerusalem, some of whom had gone to Antioch. The success of the work of these teachers in Antioch and their need of assistance induced Barnabas to join them. Either his personal affection for Saul, or an appreciation of his marked ability, prompted him to think of Saul as an efficient companion for his new work. Consequently, he went to Tarsus and invited Saul to join him in the work at Antioch. Here they continued their preaching and teaching for one year.

One of the prophets from Jerusalem, Agabus by name, reported in Antioch the approach of a great famine "throughout all the world." Soon the words of the prophet came true and many Jews in Jerusalem were in need. This crisis presented a severe test of the sincerity of the Christians in Antioch, many of whom were Gentiles. The quality of their faith was shown, however, by their sending a contribution to their needy brethren. This gift was carried by Barnabas and Saul, who, having fulfilled their mission, returned to Antioch with John Mark as an assistant. The success of the apostles in Antioch and the number of Gentiles who accepted the Christian doctrine, added emphasis to the message which was given to them by the Holy Spirit, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts 12:2.)

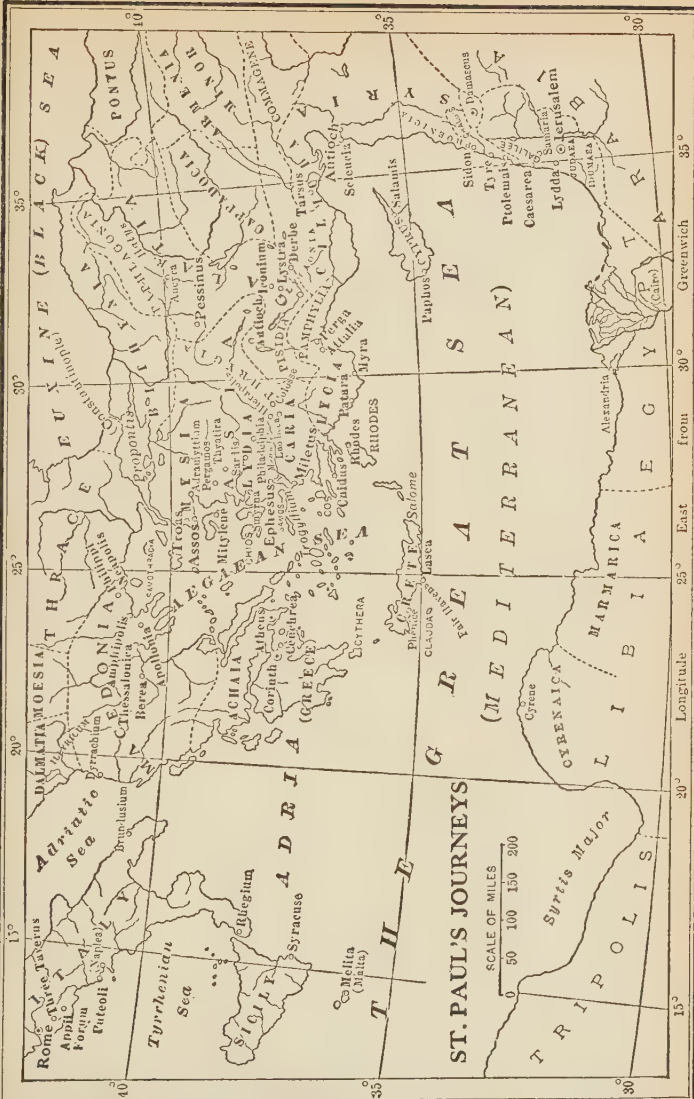
Although little consideration had been given the Gentiles by the Jews, yet the persecution of the Christians by the chief rulers at Jerusalem had led many to believe that possibly the kingdom of God was intended to include their Gentile neighbors. The divine message they had received

not only confirmed this belief, but designated Saul and Barnabas as leaders in the work.

After an appropriate farewell service, they sent Barnabas and Saul out to preach to the Gentiles.

QUESTIONS

1. Name three qualities which, in a definite way, fitted Saul for his work as an apostle.
2. In what way did Saul's Roman citizenship contribute to his advantage?
3. From what raw material was the tent cloth made which the people of Cilicia used in making tents?
4. Was Saul's conversion a miracle?
5. What is meant by conversion?
6. (a) Do conversions generally come suddenly or by a slow process?
(b) Under what circumstances do spontaneous conversions generally become manifest?
7. Had Saul probably been taught the Mosaic law and the tradition of his people?
8. Explain why any individual, who had the mental and spiritual parts such as Saul possessed, could reject the rational doctrine of Jesus and use his energy and ability to oppose it.
9. Was Saul probably conscious of his superior ability as a scholar and leader?
10. Why should the Jewish leaders attempt to oppose the teaching of the apostles?



LESSON 34

Paul's First Missionary Journey

Text: . Acts 4:36, 11:19, 13:13, 51, 14:1-25.

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. The Hebrew name of the great apostle was Saul. His Roman name was Paul. Luke, his biographer, used his Roman name subsequent to the conversion of Sergius Paulus of Paphos, Cyprus.

2. Roman authority dominated the world during the time of Paul's work.

3. The fact that Saul was a Roman citizen as well as a Jew, supplemented by the fact that he had received a divine commission, led him to the conviction that he must assume a large part of the responsibility in the establishment of the Christian Church.

4. Saul's plan of missionary work involved two important features:

(a) An organized Church in each of the great centers of influence, with responsibility for the surrounding territory.

(b) Each church to be carefully supervised and encouraged until it had developed sufficient strength to successfully care for itself.

5. Paul and Barnabas traveled about 1,400 miles on their first missionary journey.

Cyprus.—Saul and Barnabas left the harbor of Seleucia in a small sailing vessel on their way from Antioch to Cy-

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prus, with one predominant motive in their souls concerning the Gentiles. This motive, Saul later stated to Herod Agrippa II, was based on a divine commission in which he said God had directed him to "open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified."

When they reached Cyprus, the native home of Barnabas, and 140 miles from Antioch, they began their preaching in the Jewish synagogue. This work they continued until they had extended their efforts throughout the entire island from Salamis to Paphos, a distance of 100 miles. John Mark either came with them from Antioch or joined them at Salamis.

Only two important incidents mark Saul's work on the island: his interview with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, and his experience with a sorcerer, named Elymas.

Sergius Paulus, the governor of the island, had probably been influenced by the superstitious trickery of Elymas and had learned from him something concerning the new teachers who had recently come to the island. Consequently, the governor sent for Saul and Barnabas to appear before him. Elymas, fearing the new teaching might reduce his influence with the governor, attempted to refute the words of Saul and thereby turn away the proconsul from the faith he seemed to have in the apostle's message. If he had known Saul better, he would have used better judgment. Few men have heard more caustic words than were addressed to the sorcerer as Paul flashed his penetrating eyes on him, and said, "O full of guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season."

During the days when it was necessary for blind Elymas to find some one who was willing to lead him around by the hand from place to place, he had time to consider his deluded mind and his misguided soul.

Not only was the governor, who was a man of good understanding, astonished at Saul's wisdom and converted by the truth of his message, but Elymas, the sorcerer, was

thoroughly convinced by his sad experience that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Return to the Mainland.—From the time Paul was invited by Barnabas to leave his home in Tarsus, he had been under the leadership of his companion. After leaving Paphos Paul seems to have become the general leader and director of their work. The place they next visited was Perga, the capital city of Pamphylia, and 180 miles north from Paphos. Not only did Barnabas give place to Paul's superior genius and ability, but the work outlined by Paul seemed beyond the reach or interest of their assistant, John Mark, who left them and returned to Jerusalem. From Perga they went north to Antioch in Pisidia, a distance of about 100 miles. Here they again went into the Jewish synagogue and heard the reading of the Law and the Prophets.

It was the synagogue custom to invite visiting brethren to address the people or to make comments on what had been read. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Paul presented the message he had been commissioned to preach. (Acts 13: 16-41.) The effect on the people was so inspiring that Paul was asked to repeat his address the following Sabbath. When, however, the Jews saw the multitude who came to hear Paul and probably noted that his message was presented to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, they were aroused by jealousy. In consequence of their envy, they immediately began to contradict the statements of Paul. A few individuals may be found in modern days who, when the spotlight of special recognition is temporarily taken away from them, begin to criticize all work and all plans that do not originate within their own narrow and restricted minds.

Paul and Barnabas were not intimidated by these selfish outbursts of hatred, but replied boldly, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

The keen irony in Paul's statement displeased the Jews as much as it pleased the Gentiles. So bitter did the anger of these bigoted Jews become, that Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the synagogue and later were compelled to leave the city. Few conditions of mind are more annoying, more distressing, and more likely to pass incorrect judgment,

than the mental state of envy and jealousy. It was so with the Jews. They were interested in Paul's message until they saw the gate of salvation opened for the Gentiles. This selfish attitude was not limited to the Jews in Antioch, but showed itself wherever Paul or any of the apostles spoke openly to those outside of the Jewish faith. Not only did the Jews hamper Paul in his preaching, but extended their destructive influences to the churches he had organized.

Iconium.—Paul and Barnabas, being driven out of Antioch, went to Iconium, an important city about 80 miles distant. The Jews in Iconium showed the same hostility the apostles had met in Antioch. In addition to their own personal hatred, they encouraged a mob antagonism with the apostles.

Lystra and Derbe.—About twenty miles south of Iconium was the city of Lystra, to which the apostles next went, and where Paul was to receive his first cruel persecution. The superstitious minds of the inhabitants, stimulated by the fiery zeal and miraculous power of the apostles, led them to believe the new teachers were gods. Barnabas, the larger of the two men, they conceived to be Jupiter; and Paul, the active preacher, they thought was Mercury, the messenger of the gods. So convinced were they of the divinity of the apostles, that they prepared to worship them with adoration and sacrifices. The miracle performed by Paul in healing the crippled man probably caused the people to believe the apostles were supernatural beings who had appeared "in the likeness of men."

Paul Stoned.—The vindictive attitude of the Jews in Antioch and Iconium did not quickly subside. These persistent enemies followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra; "and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead."

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Paul would not have been stoned if his enemies could have proved his messages false. Persecution generally indicates inability to meet the truth, and always shows a selfish and treacherous state of mind on the part of the persecutor.

Paul, however, was not dead. With the assistance of his friends, he soon revived and went back into the city. On the following day he, in company with Barnabas, went to

Derbe, about forty miles distant, where many were converted by their preaching.

The Return Journey.—At Derbe, Paul had completed the program for his first missionary journey. Two choices were now open to him. He could return at once to his home at Tarsus, which was not far from Derbe, or he could continue his work. A weaker soul and a less courageous spirit would have been tempted to go home. He had been misunderstood by some of his own friends, he had been driven out of cities, and he had been stoned. In Tarsus a prosperous career awaited any man of Paul's ability. Here he could be successful in business and happy with his friends and loved ones. Such possibilities were sufficient to try his soul. To Paul, however, and to Paul-like men, no choice is possible unless it is in harmony with the divine will. Paul was determined to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, knowing that *all other things* would be added when necessary. No man can follow such a life program and fail.

When Paul and Barnabas had organized their work in Derbe, they returned to the hostile cities they had recently visited. These were Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Perga. In each city they encouraged those who had believed and "appointed for them elders in every church." Having completed this work at Perga, they went to the port of Attalia and sailed for Antioch.

About two years had been occupied on this first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas had traveled about 1,400 miles. The results achieved had been beyond their expectations. Consequently, they were anxious to make their report to their brethren in Antioch. They had a good report. A new religion had been presented to the world. The missionary spirit of modern times had begun.

QUESTIONS

1. What predominant thought was probably in Paul's mind as he left Antioch with Barnabas on his first missionary journey?

2. What is a sorcerer?

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3. Name the important cities in which Paul preached during his first missionary journey. These should be given in a chronological order.

4. What methods of transportation were available for Paul and Barnabas?

5. In what particular was Paul's preaching so distasteful to the Jews that they should drive him out of their cities and stone him?

6. Account for the sudden change in the minds of the people of Lystra when at one time they worshipped Paul and Barnabas as gods, and very soon thereafter drove them out of the city.

7. Where did Paul and Barnabas secure the expense money for their journey?

8. What was Paul's attitude of mind toward the persecutions he had received on his journey?

LESSON 35

Conference of Apostles at Jerusalem

Text: Galatians 2:1-10; Acts 15:1-21.

• **Opposition.**—The opposition encountered by Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey had begun to assume a dangerous form. Opposition from the antagonistic non-Christian Jews who had crucified Jesus was to be expected. These were not the people, however, who were placing the greatest barriers in the pathway of Paul and Barnabas. Those who were causing greatest concern were Jews who believed in Christ, and yet were hostile to any effort that would give the Gentiles the same spiritual opportunities which they had received. The fact that Paul and Barnabas had preached a religious liberty to the Gentiles which the conservative Jews could not endorse, developed in their warped and narrow Jewish minds an envy and jealousy which focused its bitterness on the two apostles.

There were among these antagonistic Jews a few men, such as Peter, James, and John, who, in their private thoughts were willing to take the same liberal attitude Paul had taken concerning the admission of Gentiles to the Church. They, however, were influenced by the legalistic Jews and opposed Paul and Barnabas.

Conference Called.—In consequence of this difference of opinion, and to avoid a division among the Christian apostles, a conference was called at Jerusalem. All of the leading apostles, including those from Antioch, attended the conference. The difference of opinion and consequent friction centered on the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles to membership in the Church. Paul and Barnabas took with

them to the conference a concrete example of their work in the person of Titus, a converted Gentile.

Many of the more liberal Jews who were present believed the dispute was trifling merely, and could be adjusted by a free discussion which might end in a compromise. Paul did not so consider it. He believed a new policy and new conceptions of religion were necessary if the principles which Jesus taught were to operate in the lives of men.

Jewish Beliefs.—The attitude of the conservative Jews who opposed Paul may be presented by the following statements:

1. They believed no one could properly be admitted to the Church until he had been circumcised. For their authority they quoted God's statement to Abraham: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: Every male among you shall be circumcised." (Genesis 17:10.) Their argument seemed valid and their authority good.

2. They believed that a knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures was essential to Church membership. The Gentiles were not only ignorant of the Scriptures, but they knew nothing of the Mosaic law which was the basis and guide for their worship. It was almost unthinkable that people could properly worship as church members without a knowledge of the laws which governed their ceremonial obligations.

3. They believed the keeping of the law was a fundamental requirement of their religion. It was the foundation of their religious thought. No one could keep the law if he knew nothing of its requirements.

4. They believed that Paul's knowledge of Jesus' teaching was second-hand. Many of the apostles had been personal companions of Jesus, had heard his messages, and knew his mind. Paul had not been with him and had received his information from other sources. His interpretations of the Master's will were therefore wrong.

5. They considered Paul dishonest, or at least inconsistent, in his teaching. He observed the law, was circumcised, had taught circumcision to the Jews, but he did not urge the necessity of these requirements when preaching to the Gentiles.

6. They believed Paul was preaching a shallow and superficial religion and was creating the impression among the

Gentiles that admission to the Church could be obtained by anyone with small attainment and few requirements. This, in their opinion, lowered the standard of the Church.

Paul's Defense.—Paul did not underrate the importance of the crisis. He was thoroughly convinced of the correctness of the position he had taken. He also had a reason for his faith. He was neither unconscious of the barriers that would be placed before him in his work if he was unable to convince his brethren, nor was he unmindful of the great assistance and encouragement that would come to him if he could lead his fellow apostles to think as he believed.

Paul presented his case by stating briefly the message he had given to the Gentiles. In this address he did not omit to emphasize the results that had come from his efforts. The arguments which supported Paul's position may be presented as follows:

1. Jesus taught by his interviews with the Samaritan woman and the Roman centurion that his Kingdom was world-wide and spiritual in character. Sincerity of faith, and not a servitude to the technicalities of the law, was essential. "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

2. Jesus taught by his eating with publicans and sinners and by his healing on the Sabbath day, that the principles of his Kingdom placed primary emphasis on the motive of the soul and the quality of life, and attached only secondary importance to legal forms and ceremonial rites. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

3. Paul had been commissioned by God to open the eyes of the Gentiles, "that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified." He was not commanded to teach forms, ceremonies, or legal technicalities. He had no choice when God gave this command.

4. Paul's doctrine was reasonable. If religion is to serve

a worthy purpose in the life of anyone, it must contribute to his happiness, his hopes, his contentment, and his faith in a God who is able to protect from evil and control all destiny. What vital relationship did circumcision bear to such thoughts and aspirations?

Faith in God and a willingness to obey his commands are vastly superior to the strict observance of the twenty-six different rules which the Jews believed should govern the washing of hands.

5. Paul could not be true to his own convictions if he refused to preach the message of his Lord. "For necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." The happiness and wellbeing of any individual will be commensurate with his willingness to obey God and to follow the guidance of an enlightened conscience.

The Result.—No formal argument was given at this conference. Paul presented in a bold and forceful manner his beliefs and the gospel he had preached to the Gentiles. His forceful address and the results he had achieved by his preaching convinced his hearers of his wisdom and sincerity, and caused them to endorse his plan and policy. Paul reports in Galatians 2:9, "And when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision; only they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do."

Narrowness of vision and false interpretation of God's will continue to hamper the growth and progress of the Church. Some believe not only that certain ordinances are essential to salvation, but insist that the manner of administering them must be in accord with the creed of their denominational fathers. Others believe the Lord invites to his holy communion only those who have registered their names on the roll of the local church, and have tokens in their hands as a passport to the sacrament. Such beliefs and such doctrines may be expected and will continue to show prominently in church life until human thought, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can get God's mind and be able to distinguish between what is great and what is trivial.

Special regulations, denominational creeds, and religious

ordinances have served a large purpose in the growth and development of the Church. They will continue to shield from error and safely pilot religious thought. It should be remembered, however, that they are secondary in importance to a spiritual conception of God's will and a devoted consecration to his service. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." Paul said, "No man is justified by the law before God. The righteous shall live by faith."

Other Questions.—The problem of circumcision for Gentile converts was not the only question which promised to annoy the apostles. Many technical and legal regulations had been practiced so long among the Jews that it was not easy for them to depart suddenly from these traditional influences.

Would the Jews be expected to eat with the Gentiles?

Would the converted Gentiles keep the Sabbath law?

Would they observe the law concerning clean and unclean foods?

Would religious requirements become a matter of geographical location in which the Gentiles in Jewish territory would keep the Jewish law and those outside of such territory become exempt from such requirements?

Such questions have, during the entire history of the Church, been distressing problems. They continued to annoy Paul in his evangelistic work. Only a superior spiritual intelligence, a persistent determination, and the encouraging guidance of the Holy Spirit enabled Paul to fight a good fight and to finish his course with credit to himself and honor to his Master.

"Oh fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong."

QUESTIONS

1. What sense of compensation enabled Paul to continue his work against opposition?

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2. Were the Jews who opposed Paul and Barnabas to be criticized for their attitude?

3. What value had circumcision contributed to the religion of the Jews?

4. Is it essential that an applicant for church membership shall know the religious doctrines of the Church?

5. Name a specific purpose which a knowledge of the Mosaic law served in the life of the Jews.

6. Did the personal and intimate companionship of the apostles with Jesus during his ministry give them a more accurate knowledge of his will and a better understanding of his Kingdom than Paul had obtained?

7. What specific requirements are generally made by evangelical denominations of those who apply for church membership?

8. What is meant by the statement, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth light"?

9. Do results always justify the means?

10. Name two common causes for division of opinion touching Church doctrine.

LESSON 36

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Text: Acts 15:36-41, 16:1-40, 17:1-34, 18:1-21.

Division of Opinion.—Traditional custom and fear of criticism frequently show a stronger influence than reason. When Paul returned from the conference of the apostles at Jerusalem, he began to preach the gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch.

Peter was more impulsive than thoughtful. He had demonstrated this quality of mind many times during his association with Jesus as a disciple. When he came to Antioch and heard Paul preach, he was much influenced by the new and liberal interpretation of the gospel, and departed so far from the traditions of the Jews as to eat with Gentile converts. After mature deliberation, however, Peter reversed his mind in so far as he had endorsed, both by words and example, the freedom of Jews eating with Gentiles. This change of opinion was probably caused by the influence of the conservative Jews at Jerusalem, who vigorously opposed any violation of traditional customs. Peter probably considered that if his future work was to be done among Palestine Jews, any endorsement of a brotherly relationship between Jews and Gentiles promised serious barriers to his influence. He had already indicated his own personal conviction and his belief in Paul's conception of religion, but he did not have the courage to take his stand with Paul in the support of such Christian liberty.

To such an attitude and to such inconsistency, Paul, in caustic words, made a public reply, "If thou being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how com-

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peldest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? If righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for naught." Such plain words could not be misunderstood by Peter or any of the conservative Jews who heard them.

The Journey Begun.—The influence of Peter and the conservative Jews at Jerusalem was no small factor in separating Paul and Barnabas on their second missionary journey. A discussion relative to taking Mark with them also contributed to sending them on separate routes. Consequently, Barnabas took with him Mark and sailed for Cyprus. Paul took with him Silas, an efficient leader in the Antioch church, and started north. Silas, like Paul, was a Roman citizen as well as a Jew.

To Macedonia.—Paul and Silas had no definite objective when they left Antioch. Paul's experience and faith prompted him to trust the Holy Spirit for guidance. His desire to visit the churches he had organized on the mainland led him north through Tarsus, his home town, to Derbe. At Derbe they gave encouragement to the church and moved on to Lystra, where Paul associated with him Timothy, the son of a Greek and a Jewess. To avoid any criticism from the Jews, Paul circumcised Timothy. This act of Paul is worthy of careful consideration. Circumcision was not essential, either to faith or salvation. Paul, however, was anxious to avoid misunderstanding and possibly offense on the part of the Jews among whom he might work.

Thought should be given to what we do as well as to what we leave undone, that no one may misinterpret our actions or motives.

From Lystra they passed on through Iconium and Antioch into Asia. Although many Gentiles were to be found in the cities through which they passed, they did not stop to preach, but moved on through Phrygia and Mysia to Troas. Here Paul was urged in a vision to go over into Macedonia. Paul's soul was so sensitive to spiritual guidance that he interpreted this message as a divine command. Here he added Luke to his company and, with his three companions, sailed from Troas across the bay to Neopolis. From Neopolis, they travelled about nine miles inland to Philippi, where Paul preached his first sermon on his second journey.

Philippi.—Philippi was the most important city in which Paul had preached. It was a Roman colony, and the place

where Brutus and Cassius were defeated by Antony, subsequent to the assassination of Julius Caesar.

As usual, Paul's preaching was successful. The fact that no synagogue was found in Philippi was not used as an excuse by the Jews of the city for omitting their regular worship. They had evidently adopted the custom of meeting for prayer at the riverside, outside of the city. Here Paul preached to them.

Lydia, a woman of Thyatira, who probably operated a store in Philippi, was converted by Paul's presentation of the Christian religion. Her interest in the welfare of the apostles was shown when she invited them to use her home while in the city.

A few days later Paul found a slave girl who, because of certain peculiar powers of voice which she had, was being used by her superstitious masters as a source of profit. They believed her power came from some weird and supernatural spirit, and as such they advertised her. When the apostle saw the slavery to which she was being subjected and that she was capable of better things, he immediately freed her mind from bondage and gave her soul the spiritual freedom he had been commissioned to preach.

Paul's act in freeing this slave girl from a wretched bondage, like the efforts of those who would free the lives of men and women from the bondage of intoxicating liquor, met with strenuous opposition from those whose money income was affected. Her masters, in retaliation for their loss, had Paul and Silas arrested and placed in prison.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage."

The bitter hatred between the Romans and the Jews had been growing by accumulation. So intense had the feeling become, that, during the same year Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi, Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. Such intense feeling promised little for the freedom of the Apostles. God, however, protects those who put their trust in him. He protected Paul and Silas.

Paul's enthusiasm in his work led him to preach to the

jailer and prisoners when he found he could not preach openly in the city. The conditions of bondage and darkness of the prison were glorified by the spiritual light which came into the lives of these men, as Paul revealed to them the message of him who came into the world to make men free.

"And suddenly, there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bonds were loosed."

Such an incident not only struck terror to the minds of the jailer and the prisoners, but led them to think seriously of the words Paul and Silas had spoken to them. Like many individuals who must meet extreme circumstances before they can see God, the jailer brought Paul and Silas out of the prison and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" To this important question, Paul answered by giving him the only effective recipe for removing sin, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

The following morning much uneasiness came to the minds of the magistrates when they learned what had occurred during the night. A great earthquake had shaken the prison and had loosed the bonds of the prisoners. Paul and Silas had used much of the night in singing, praying, and preaching to the prisoners. None of the prisoners had escaped, although opportunity had been given them. Most disconcerting of all, was the rumor that the two Jewish prisoners were Roman citizens. When they had verified this report, they became conscious of the error they had made by beating and imprisoning them uncondemned. They therefore sent the sergeants, saying, "Let those men go." When this information came to Paul he replied, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, let them come themselves and bring us out." This they hastened to do. "And when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city."

Thessalonica.—From Philippi, Paul and his assistants went through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, the capital city of Macedonia. Luke evidently was left in Philippi. Here Paul began his preaching in the synagogue and afterward preached to the Gentiles. Again the remarkable success of the apostles aroused the jealous anger of the Jews who,

in turn, encouraged the ignorant rabble of the city to persecute Paul and his companions. So violent did this opposition become that they stormed the house of Jason where the apostles were lodging. The politarchs who ruled the city finally accepted Jason's bond for the behavior of his guests. The apostles, therefore, to avoid any further embarrassment for Jason, their host, departed quietly by night from the city.

Berea.—At Berea, Paul was well received until a few antagonistic Jews came from Thessalonica and aroused opposition to his work. He, however, organized a church which was, for a time, supervised by Silas and Timothy, who remained in the city. Paul then left for Athens, where he expected his two companions would soon join him. The people of Berea showed a praiseworthy attitude toward the message of the apostles, in that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

Athens.—Athens, the center of Grecian culture, was the most important city Paul had visited. A less courageous soul would have hesitated to enter this city of philosophic learning with any hope that a new spiritual light might be given them. Regardless of the fact that the Athenians considered Athens the source of all dependable philosophy, it must be remembered that all who did not believe in the Christian religion presented a definite appeal to Paul. He knew he had the message of eternal life and he feared no man's argument or philosophy.

The idolatry of the Athenians attracted Paul's attention when he first entered the city. The city was "full of idols." This fact indicated to Paul the emotional superstition of this people of mental culture.

Paul preached both in the synagogue and in the market place. Little difficulty was experienced in obtaining an audience with people whose greatest pleasure was found in hearing and discussing some new philosophy.

When the Epicureans and the Stoics learned that Paul had a thoughtful message, they brought him to the Areopagus, or hill, where the highest judicial court of Athens held its sessions. Here Paul preached a forceful sermon. His text was, "To an unknown God." This inscription he had seen on one of the religious altars in the city.

Paul's work was not effective in Athens. The spirit that

had condemned Socrates to drink the fatal poison for teaching new elements in religious thought, did not readily accept Paul's teaching concerning Christ and his resurrection. Their philosophy determined what they were willing to believe. They had no formula by which could be explained the resurrection of anyone. Paul expected Silas and Timothy to join him at Athens, but was disappointed. He therefore moved on to Corinth without them.

The spirit showed by the Athenians is not uncommon in modern days. Men in times of danger, difficulty, or distress have an uncanny and superstitious fear which sometimes causes them to cry out to the unknown god. When, however, the storm passes and their fears are quieted, they are unwilling to believe what they can neither see nor explain by their self-made philosophy. No god who can be thoroughly understood, and whose providences can be definitely explained by human minds, is worthy of the faith which brings comfort and immortal life.

Corinth.—Corinth was the metropolis of Grecian Achaia, the center of commerce between the east and the west. While in Corinth, Paul lodged with Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, who had been driven out of Rome with other Jews by Claudius in A.D. 50. During the one and one-half years Paul remained in Corinth, he earned sufficient money for his expenses by engaging in his vocation as tent maker. Within a short time after his arrival, he was joined by Silas and Timothy who not only assisted him in the work but, by their companionship, stimulated him to greater enthusiasm.

As was Paul's custom, he began his work in the synagogue, but the Jews, as in many other cities, resented his teaching to such a degree that he transferred his preaching services to the home of Justus. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, had been converted by Paul's preaching. He was succeeded in office by Sosthenes, who was most active in Paul's persecution while in the city.

The hostility to Paul and his work, being of a religious character, was ignored by the proconsul Gallio. Consequently, Paul's work was hindered only by personal friction and factional annoyance.

When he had thoroughly organized his work in Corinth, he, with Aquila and Priscilla, proceeded to Ephesus. After a very brief stay and a generous welcome by the local Jews,

Paul proceeded alone to Caesarea. Thus ended his second missionary journey, which extended over a period of approximately three years. He had traveled about 2,000 miles.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does traditional custom frequently show a stronger influence on an individual's belief than reason?
2. Does any religious dispute arise in modern days which is analogous to the friction caused by Jews eating with Gentiles?
3. Name the probable causes for the separation of Paul and Barnabas at the beginning of their second missionary journey.
4. Was Paul consistent when he circumcised Timothy? Explain.
5. Did any particular reason exist for the Jews of Philippi holding their prayer meeting by the river?
6. What right had Paul to take the source of revenue from the masters of the slave girl?
7. Name two qualities of Paul which showed prominently during his imprisonment in Philippi.
8. How was it possible for Paul to maintain his courage and fearlessness in the presence of such great opposition?
9. Explain why the mental development of the Athenians seemed to operate against their acceptance of Paul's message.
10. What does idolatry indicate concerning the human mind?

LESSON 37

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Text: Acts 18:24-28, 19:1-41, 20:1-38, 21:1-16.

Ephesus.—Paul left Antioch, his base of operations, and started for the populous city of Ephesus. On his way through Galatia, he strengthened and encouraged the churches he had previously organized.

Ephesus was the capital city and the most important commercial center of the Roman province in Asia. It was particularly noted for its temple. This beautiful shrine of white marble was considered sacred from the fact that in it was a statue of the goddess Diana, which was thought by the people to have come down from heaven as a direct gift from the gods. Many other large public buildings not only added splendor and beauty to this populous city, but made it the center of interest for the entire country. Among these public improvements was a great theatre or stadium in which could be seated approximately 25,000 persons.

Here Paul found a large number of Jews and preached in their synagogue for a period of three months. He afterward used the lecture room of Tyrannus, who was probably a teacher of philosophy or rhetoric.

Opposition to his work continued to present itself. The two greatest opposing forces in Ephesus were the group of Jewish Christians who were followers of John the Baptist, and the much larger group of Romans and Greeks who were idolators and worshipped at the shrine of Diana.

Followers of John.—Many followers of John the Baptist had found their way to this commercial center of Asia. Although they did not fully understand the messages of their

leader, they gave him first place in their religious thought. The most important element in their faith was their belief that a great punishment was about to come upon the Jews, and that repentance was their only way of escape from the approaching disaster.

Aquila and Priscilla had been left in Ephesus by Paul on his second missionary journey, and had converted Apollos, a vigorous leader among John's disciples, from his limited view of the Christian faith to a full acceptance of the religion which Paul preached. Apollos was no small acquisition to their force of workers. He had not only received a superior education at the schools of Alexandria, but he was a good thinker and an eloquent speaker.

Soon after Paul's arrival, he had twelve converts from the group that followed John. A larger number, however, held to their faith and continued to place Jesus in a secondary position to their leader.

Ephesus the Center of Activity.—Paul did not confine his efforts to Ephesus alone. The seven churches to which reference is made in the Book of Revelation, were probably organized during Paul's work at Ephesus. One of Paul's assistants outside of the city was Epaphras, who went up the Meander River and organized the church at Colossae.

The Idolaters.—The philosophic Grecian mind in Asia had been influenced by Roman thought. This combination attached great significance to any religion that had in it a prominent mystic or superstitious element. The belief that the statue of the Grecian goddess, Artemus, later identified with the Roman Diana, had fallen directly from heaven as a gift of the gods, led many of the Ephesians to give the idol first place in their reverence and worship. So popular was this belief that every adherent to this idolatrous faith considered it necessary to have in his possession an image of the sacred goddess. This demand for images gave rise to one of the largest manufacturing industries of Ephesus. Demetrius, a prominent leader of the local merchants, was a silversmith and supplied images of the better sort to the wealthy classes. These were generally made of marble or silver.

Exorcists.—Considerable annoyance came to Paul from a certain group of sorcerers in Ephesus, who had been practicing hypnotism, and other magical arts, for gain. Paul had

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performed miraculous cures but had rendered this service in the name of his Master, and without cost. When two of the sorcerers attempted to perform the cure of a maniac, their patient turned upon them and severely wounded them. This prominent failure popularized the work of Paul and brought ridicule to the efforts of the false wonder-workers. So serious did the opposition to the sorcerers become, that they brought forth their books of magic and publicly burnt them. The cost value of these books was about \$8,500.

Antagonism.—Ephesus had been the center of Paul's greatest work. He was not destined, however, to leave the city without great opposition. The success of his work and the number of his conversions soon began to show in a marked decrease in the demand for idolatrous images. These had been the source of great profit to many merchants. Violent opposition therefore arose on the part of those whose business was most seriously affected. Demetrius was the leader in this opposition. He aroused the craftsmen to bitter hatred against Paul by pointing out to them a future disaster for their business if the apostle continued to preach his religion in Ephesus. "And when they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with confusion." Men shouted for their goddess when they meant the income from the sale of images. In modern days men sometimes shout for personal liberty when they mean income from liquor. Demetrius knew the sensitive spot in humankind when he said to those whom he intended to influence, "Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth." Money was his theme when addressing his fellow craftsmen. Religion or patriotism was the cry he advised them to make before the people. Well did they follow his instructions. Human nature has not essentially changed.

The Riot.—The effect was probably greater than Demetrius expected. The upheaval of anger against Paul and his hated followers spread throughout the city. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" was an effective slogan. People everywhere became excited. The crowd became a mob, as it filled the great stadium, many not knowing why they were there or even the cause of the confusion. For two hours the uproar continued until the city clerk appeared before them. When, after much difficulty, he secured their attention,

he censured them for their lack of religious faith, and threatened them with being called to account for their conduct if they did not disburse and allow the ordinary processes of law to punish offenders. His tactfulness and the authority the people knew he possessed, quieted their wrathful cries and induced the mob to leave the stadium. Paul, after more than two years of preaching and teaching, quietly left the city. He had not failed.

At Jerusalem.—From Ephesus Paul went to Corinth, where considerable friction in the Church had developed. Here he remained for about three months. Leaving Corinth when he was joined by Luke, he sailed for Caesarea, stopping at Troas, Miletus, and Tyre. At both Tyre and Caesarea Paul was warned that Jewish hostility had grown in his absence, and that strong antagonism and possibly personal danger awaited him at Jerusalem. Like his Master, whom he faithfully served, he persistently moved on to Jerusalem. His faith in the religion he taught gave him courage to meet whatever problems and difficulties might come to him. His superior intelligence and his accurate sense of spiritual values led him to the conviction that persecution and even death were not the greatest calamities which might come upon him. Well did he realize that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

QUESTIONS

1. Name three important incidents of Paul's third missionary journey.
2. How did Paul encourage or aid the churches he visited?
3. What were the most important differences in the beliefs of Paul and the followers of John the Baptist?
4. Why was it easy for the Greeks to maintain an idolatrous faith?
5. Why did not Demetrius use the same commercial arguments in public which he used privately with the craftsmen?
6. What argument of patriotism could Demetrius use against Paul?
7. Why are religion and patriotism frequently used as a pretext to cover selfishness and greed?

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8. Name two points in which hostility to Paul was similar to that shown to Jesus.
9. What was the most serious antagonism Paul was destined to meet?
10. For what was the theatre or stadium in Ephesus used?

LESSON 38

Paul's Trials and Execution

Text: Acts 21: 27-40, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28;
Second Timothy 4: 6-8.

Paul's Work Ended.—From the time Saul met God on the Damascus road, he had kept a straight course on the up-grade. He could therefore not fail of victory. His life had not been an effort to find the path of least resistance, nor to win self-praise, wealth, or position. He had carefully and thoughtfully established in his own soul those convictions which harmonize with God's will. These he followed with determination. When he finished his third missionary journey, the end of the road seemed in sight, but he was unafraid.

Paul in Jerusalem.—When Paul returned to Jerusalem he received a formal welcome from James and the church elders. It was not difficult, however, to see that underneath this shallow hospitality there was suspicion and jealousy. Rumors had reached his brethren at home that he had rejected the Mosaic law and had violated Jewish traditions in many equally offensive ways.

Some people never learn that they are knaves who carry destructive gossip and they are fools who believe it.

To remove any misunderstanding, Paul was advised to appear in the temple before four of their elders and explain the position he had taken touching the Jewish law. Paul complied with this request.

While in the temple he was seen by a few of his Jewish enemies, who had wandered from Asia to Jerusalem. Releasing their vindictive spirit, these infuriated vultures

rushed upon Paul, dragged him outside of the court and cried out, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place." Paul was saved from the claws and fangs of these assassins only by the timely appearance of Claudius Lysias, the commander of the soldiers, who brought him into the castle. As the commander was bringing him to safety, Paul requested that he might be given an opportunity to address the people. His request being granted, Paul spoke to the crowd in Hebrew and received attentive consideration until he referred to his message to the Gentiles. When this sensitive spot in the Jewish mind was touched, their wrath again broke forth. Frantic and enraged like an angry bull, they threw dust in the air and bellowed their murderous threats. To protect him from the threatening mob, Paul was taken into the castle and ordered examined by scourging. When they had him securely tied, Paul caused considerable consternation among his examiners by saying, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" When they learned he was a Roman, they immediately released him from his bonds and, the following day, brought him before the Sanhedrin for examination.

In the Sanhedrin were Sadducees who vigorously resented Paul's statements, "I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This frank statement of Paul not only prejudiced the Pharisees in his favor and aroused the Sadducees against him, but caused other discussions among the members of this Jewish court. When it was evident no decision concerning Paul could be reached, Lysias ordered him returned to the castle.

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer." Paul needed no greater solace or comfort.

These Christ-killing Jews were determined that Paul should not live. Consequently, the following morning, forty of them bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.

Paul at Caesarea.—The commander of the soldiers was informed by Paul's nephew of a plan to kill Paul the following day on his way to the Council House. He at once prepared to send him away secretly to Felix, the Roman

procurator of Judaea, whose seat of government was at Caesarea. Late that night Paul was rushed to Caesarea under guard of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen.

Felix was a typical Roman governor. He had few thoughts that did not come from motives of cruelty, lust, or greed. His wife, Drusilla, and sister of Herod Agrippa II, probably did not encourage him in acts of honesty, righteousness, and mercy.

Five days after Paul arrived in Caesarea, a formal complaint was made against him by Ananias and a committee from the Sanhedrin. Tertullius, a Roman citizen and lawyer, presented the indictment. The specific features of the charge were that he was "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes: who moreover assayed to profane the temple." To these charges Paul was allowed to speak. So thoroughly did he answer and refute each charge that he was not condemned but was placed under the guard of a centurion who gave him as much liberty as prison regulations would permit.

Felix and his Jewish wife, Drusilla, had become interested in Paul's history and belief. They accordingly sent for Paul, who boldly related to them his religious experiences. In his address he incidentally made some frank statements concerning "righteousness and self-control, and the judgment to come." He thus intentionally uncovered the conscience of the procurator and caused the cruel libertine to catch a passing glance at his own soul. Little wonder is it he was terrified. "Go thy way for this time," said the governor, "and when I have a convenient season I will call thee unto me."

Few men delay their breathing until a more convenient season.

Paul remained a prisoner in Caesarea for a period of two years, when Porcius Festus, the successor of Felix, became procurator of Judaea. Very soon after Festus became governor, the Jews asked him to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial. This request, however, was only a pretext to cover their plan to kill him on the way. That they might not consider their wishes altogether ignored, Festus invited them to make charges against him at his own court in Caesarea. This invitation was accepted and, after many false charges were

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made against Paul, none of which was true, Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's judgment-seat where I ought to be judged." After a brief conference with his advisers, Festus replied, "Thou hast appealed unto Caesar: unto Caesar shalt thou go."

Within a few days, Herod Agrippa II, King of Chalcis, came to visit Festus at Caesarea. The governor took this opportunity to consult Agrippa concerning Paul. The fame of Paul and the fact that he was a Roman as well as a Jew, developed an interest in the mind of Agrippa to see and hear this noted prisoner. Consequently, the prisoner was asked to appear before them the following day. Paul did not hesitate to avail himself of this opportunity, and with masterful poise he presented himself before Agrippa, his sister-wife Bernice, and Festus. When Paul had related the experience of his conversion and explained his belief in the laws of Moses and the resurrection of Jesus, Festus attempted to dismiss the penetrating words from his mind by saying, "Paul, thou art mad." But Agrippa said, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." To this slight intimation of faith, Paul replied, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

Paul was taken back to prison. Another ruler had postponed the salvation of his soul.

Soon afterward, Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome. In company with him were Aristarchus and Luke, who probably secured permission to go as laborers or slaves.

The Voyage to Rome.—The voyage from Caesarea to Puteoli, on the northern shore of the Bay of Naples, was made in a sailing vessel which, for purposes of trade, stopped at many places along the coast. After passing Fair Havens, the ship was struck by a terrific storm which almost broke it in pieces. The freight was thrown into the sea and all on board were terrified and expected death. Paul assured them that, in a vision, he had been assured that no one would be lost. These cheering words not only gave them courage, but added much to their respect for Paul.

After fourteen days of drifting in the open sea, they were finally able to land on the island of Malta. Here the natives considered Paul a god from the fact that while making a

fire on the beach he was bitten by a poisonous snake and remained unhurt. In return for the hospitality of the governor of the island, Publius by name, Paul cured his father, who was ill with a fever. After remaining on the island three months, they sailed in another vessel for Rome.

First Imprisonment at Rome.—When Paul arrived at Rome he was delivered to a Roman official who treated him with great consideration and leniency. Although he was a prisoner and under guard, he was permitted to live in his own hired house and given an opportunity to preach the gospel with freedom and boldness. Here he remained for two years. Paul was at last tried and acquitted. This verdict was probably due to the influence of some of Caesar's household who had been converted. This acquittal indicated that Jewish envy and jealousy had no influence in the Roman court.

After his release, Paul visited many of the churches and probably visited Spain. His troubles, however, were not ended. Jewish hatred had not disappeared. He was again arrested and sent to Rome.

Second Imprisonment at Rome.—Paul's second imprisonment at Rome was gloomy. Little freedom was given him. He was treated as a criminal. "I suffered hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor." The future looked dark, yet he was able to say, "I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day."

He seemed to know that another acquittal was not probable and that death would soon release him from his earthly problems. With a strength and courage possible only for those who trust God, Paul said, "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." Anyone who can make such a statement, and mean what he says, need have no worry or sorrow for what may come to him. His future is safe.

At last the fateful day came. He was condemned to die; wrongfully condemned and without guilt. Outside of the

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city he was beheaded with the sword. His spirit, like that of Stephen, returned to his Lord and Master.

“How well he fell asleep!
Like some proud river, widening toward the sea;
Calmly and grandly, silently and deep,
Life joined eternity.”

QUESTIONS

1. How could Paul have avoided Jewish criticism?
2. Name two distinct results which came from Paul's preaching.
3. Was the caustic criticism of the Jews concerning Paul's work prompted by a sincere motive to change his belief to a superior faith?
4. When recognized authorities disagree concerning elements of faith, how may an individual secure the truth?
5. Name two arguments which tend to prove false the attitude of the Jews at Jerusalem.
6. Is it possible for any individual to secure the same spiritual fortitude which Paul showed in the presence of his persecution?
7. Why did the Jews at Caesarea present charges of a religious character against Paul while he was before a Roman court?
8. Did Paul probably preach the gospel on his way from Caesarea to Rome?
9. Did Paul's approaching death probably cause any fear or terror to come to him?
10. What was the probable year of Paul's death?

LESSON 39

Peter

Text: Matthew 10: 2-4; 16: 17, 24: 3; Mark 13: 3; Luke 6: 13;
John 1: 43, 6: 66-69, 21; Acts 3, 9: 26-32;
Galatians 1: 17, 2: 1-10.

Peter's Early Life.—Peter's original name was Simon. His father, Jonas, was a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee. Peter and his brother, Andrew, under their father's supervision, also learned the occupation of fishermen, and were partners with John and James, the sons of Zebedee.

Although Peter was slow in his mental processes and his education was limited, yet he had a devotional disposition and a courageous soul. The principle, "If you would avoid mistakes you must say nothing, do nothing, and be nothing," was not followed by Peter. In consequence of his impulsive spirit and an ill-timed judgment, which he sometimes showed, Peter frequently blundered and made mistakes which later brought to him regret and sorrow. No great man, however, has made his contribution to the sum of existing good in the world without some fault and criticism.

Peter was married in early life. His wife's name, according to Clement of Alexandria, was Perpetua. The apostle was accompanied by his wife on some of his preaching tours, and while at home lived with his mother-in-law at Capernaum. His earlier home was in Bethsaida.

His Early Training.—Peter was about thirty-five years of age when Jesus called him as a disciple. Prior to this time, however, he and Andrew, John, and James, were disciples of John the Baptist, from whom they received instruction of great value. They continued to follow their usual

vocation as fishermen for a considerable time after they were first called to be disciples of Jesus. The second call came to them on the Lake of Galilee while they were at work. "And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately obeyed. They did not tell Jesus to ask someone who was better fitted for the work, nor did they tell him they were too busy to do his will. "They straightway left their nets and followed him."

Peter's Confession and Rebuke.—Jesus did not omit any opportunity to counsel with his disciples concerning their work and their relation to his kingdom. His first great revelation to them was brought to light in a private conference at Caesarea Philippi, when he asked them, "Who say ye that I am?" A more momentous question had never come to these humble fishermen. They had been in his closest companionship and had listened to his teaching. They had formed some opinion concerning his identity. No man could associate with Jesus and hear his words without some thought and some conviction concerning him. What they thought would determine their loyalty and devotion to him during the coming days. What men *think* has regulated conduct since time began. Some of the disciples were reticent about expressing their personal opinions, but, "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In response to this noble confession, Jesus told him that the truth he had expressed would become the foundation of the Christian Church.

Jesus not only revealed to his disciples his own identity, but he uncovered for them his future with its torment, agony, and death. He told them that he must "suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed." This was more than the explosive Peter could endure. "And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: This shall never be unto thee." His devotion was better than his judgment. The sincerity of his motive was superior to the wisdom of his words. Peter's foolish effort to correct and improve his Master's plan and to change God's will, met with a stern rebuke. Jesus turned to him and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Men continue in their own efforts to warp God's plan and to

follow only so much of it as will harmonize with their own selfish desires.

The Transfiguration.—Regardless of Peter's weakness, his love and devotion qualified him to stand on the Mount of Transfiguration with his Lord. He was permitted to witness a splendor and glory which the shadow of the cross could not darken. Into the mystery of this sacred scene, human thought dare not enter. Peter, however, could not reverently and silently worship, even in the presence of angels. His thoughts could not rise above the level of houses and human companionship. The same human element was prominent when he assumed that, knowing the Lake of Galilee as a fisherman knows it, he could walk on the water as he saw his Master do. He could not understand that the power and spirit of God was infinitely higher and more potent than anything experienced by humankind.

Peter's Denial.—The darkest spot in Peter's record marked the denial of his Lord. When Peter sheathed his sword at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane he lost his courage. His impetuous devotion and curiosity, however, led him to the courtyard of Caiaphas that he might be present at the trial of his Master. Unwilling to endure the sneers of the rabble who were mocking Jesus and ridiculing his friends, he cowardly adopted falsehood as his only protection. When he found himself hopelessly entangled in lies which his offended attitude and oaths could not conceal, his soul was chilled by that unendurable but kindly look of Jesus. Words of censure would have been welcome. Even condemnation would have brought less of pain and anguish than the look of love and pity which Peter saw in his Master's eyes as the cock crew. Little wonder is it that he went out of the judgment hall to a lonely place where he wept bitterly. It was necessary that he purify his soul and reinstate his conscience. From that moment his soul was cleansed by a sincere repentance and a conscious forgiveness. He was now ready to follow the road of obedience and service. This new vision of his Master, brightened by many tears, brought him early to the empty tomb to learn the truth about his risen Lord. In consequence of Peter's repentance, Jesus was quick to restore him to the place he had forfeited by his sin.

Pentecost.—Peter and the other disciples had received

the Holy Spirit according to the promise Jesus had given them. On the day of Pentecost a great multitude of people were gathered together at Jerusalem. Peter used this opportunity to preach to them. He had no special program of music, no choir, and no church. He did have spiritual power and a message which came so directly from the throne of God that "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" Not all those who hear sermons are "pricked in their heart." A smaller number are anxious to learn what they should do. Peter's response was the same advice he had received from John the Baptist and from Jesus. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." On that day three thousand souls were added to the Church. The same message continues to have power for the salvation of men.

In Prison.—When the chief priests and Pharisees crucified Jesus, they thought they had put an end to his teaching. They had assured themselves that henceforth their ceremonial religion would be free from criticism and their sincerity never again be challenged. To their surprise, and chagrin, the followers of the Rabbi from Nazareth were in Jerusalem, and were not only preaching the same doctrine their leader had presented, but were teaching that the chief rulers had crucified Jesus and were therefore guilty of innocent blood. The anger which marked the attitude of the chief priests and Sadducees toward Jesus, flamed up with renewed vigor when they learned what these preaching apostles were doing. They immediately "laid hands on the apostles and put them in prison." Very soon, however, they were rescued by the miraculous power of the angel of the Lord, and were again preaching in the temple.

The chief rulers were not accustomed to such rebellion against their wishes and authority. When they challenged the apostles to show the cause for such insubordination, Peter only added to their irritation and uneasiness of mind by saying, "We must obey God rather than men." Puzzled, bewildered, and with an element of fear in their souls, they scourged the apostles and "charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ." Such defiance only increased the hos-

tility and antagonism of the chief rulers. Their spirit of revenge and cruelty reached a crisis when Stephen was stoned.

Peter's Vision.—Cornelius was the captain of a Roman army stationed at Caesarea. Although he was a Gentile, he had learned something of the Jewish religion and worshipped Jehovah. While at prayer on a certain afternoon about three o'clock, he was directed in a vision to send for Peter who was in the house of Simon, a tanner, at Joppa, a city about forty miles south of Caesarea. At noon on the following day the three messengers, whom he immediately dispatched, stood before the gate at Simon's house in Joppa.

Prior to the coming of the messengers, Peter also had a strange vision. While on the housetop praying, he became hungry and there appeared before him, "as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common and unclean." No Jew could respect himself and violate the law God had given Moses concerning clean and unclean animals as food. (Leviticus 11.) This law had been stressed in every Jewish home for more than one thousand years. They believed God made a similar distinction between Jews and Gentiles. They believed that foreign nations had their own gods and that Jehovah not only belonged exclusively to the Jews, but that he was not interested in any who were not numbered among Abraham's descendents.

In consequence of this belief, it was difficult for Peter to properly interpret God's words, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Peter was led to a clearer understanding of the vision by the request of the messengers that he go at once to Cornelius at Caesarea. The first step from the beaten path of traditional custom is difficult for many people. It was difficult for Peter. When, however, he had heard from Cornelius the story of his vision, he said, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."

This statement of Peter only confirmed and encouraged Paul's interest in preaching to the Gentiles.

PETER

Peter's Death.—From the time Peter left his fishing boats on the Lake of Galilee, his experiences were varied. In all of his trying moments he had persistently held to his faith and purpose. He had obeyed his Master's command, "Follow me." True it is, he denied his Lord and frequently stumbled, but his mistakes became the discipline through which he passed to higher conceptions of God and truth. He not only followed Jesus in his devotion to the work of the Kingdom, but he followed him in his persecution and death. He could have chosen to remain in Capernaum and catch fish. He could have been excused from his Master's service and concerned himself with fishing boats and markets. He could have refused to follow a road of ridicule, suffering, and torment, and selected one of pleasure, ease, and money. He was not required to give his time, his service, and his life to his Lord. He chose. He chose with wisdom. The short measure of human life will have its regrets, its gloom, and its pain, but the great infinite eternity will also have its glory and happiness for those who are able to finish the course and keep the faith. There will always be darkness and despair for those who refuse to obey the command, "Follow me."

Kitto informs us that Paul, being a Roman citizen, was beheaded and that Peter, being a Jew and foreigner, was crucified. These apostles had been preaching vigorously against evils of immorality. They had offered Jesus' plan of salvation from sin. This religious activity in Rome so antagonized the emperor Nero that he ordered them imprisoned and later executed.

Tradition informs us that when Peter was taken to the Vatican mount he did not consider himself worthy to be executed as his Lord was crucified, but begged his executioners to place him on the cross with his head downward. His request was granted, and the great apostle committed his soul to his Lord whom he had tried to follow.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two characteristics of Peter.
2. What seemed to be Jesus' purpose in selecting disciples?

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

3. Did Peter's confession that Jesus was the Son of God indicate a knowledge of Jesus which was superior to that of the other disciples?

4. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter for expressing a desire to shield him from coming harm?

5. Name five extraordinary experiences of Peter while a disciple of Jesus.

6. Did Peter show, by his denial, a loss of faith in Jesus?

7. What did repentance mean as Peter preached it?

8. Name two causes for the hostility of the chief priests and rulers toward Peter.

9. Did the results achieved by Peter on the day of Pentecost differ essentially from a successful revival service in modern days? Explain.

10. Did any definite and valid reason exist for a discrimination between clean and unclean foods?

LESSON 40

Books of the New Testament—I

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. The oldest complete copy of the New Testament is to be found in the Imperial Library at Petrograd. It is written by hand on parchment or skin and was found in a monastery at Mt. Sinai in A.D. 1844. No chapters or paragraphs are indicated in this old manuscript.

2. The New Testament has been translated into 750 different languages. It was first translated into the English language in the fourteenth century by Wycliffe and his associates. William Tyndale's Revision appeared in A.D. 1525. The Authorized Version, or the King James I revision, was completed in A.D. 1611. The American Standard Revision appeared in A.D. 1895.

The Books.—The twenty-seven books of the New Testament should be remembered in the following order:

a. Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are largely biographical in character.

b. The Acts.

c. The thirteen Epistles of Paul: Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

d. Hebrews.

e. James.

f. The two Epistles of Peter.

g. The three Epistles of John.

h. Jude.

i. Revelation.

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

Original Purpose.—The books of the New Testament were messages which were in general written to churches or groups of individuals by men who were close to the facts about which they wrote. These messages contained information, encouragement, spiritual exhortation, and counsel. The writers differed in occupation, scholarship, and ability, but all were stimulated by a sincere motive to aid those among whom they found themselves, or to whom they wrote.

It will be noticed that throughout the entire New Testament great emphasis was placed by the early Christian writers on Christian Education. Jesus and Paul taught the people. The ultimate object in any teaching process is to develop such a mental and spiritual condition in the minds and souls of individuals that they will be able to respond readily and wisely in the presence of their daily circumstances and problems. The great purpose of the New Testament writers was to so develop the people whom they taught that Christian leaders might become equipped for the task which was before them in the development of the Christian Church.

Chronological Order.—The exact chronological order of the books of the New Testament is uncertain. We are assured, however, that the order in which we find them in our Bibles was not the order in which they were originally written. The following order will suggest a logical development of the New Testament record:

1. Paul's Epistles to new churches: First Thessalonians, Second Thessalonians, Galatians, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians.

2. Biographical records of the life of Jesus and the origin of Christianity: Mark, Matthew, Luke, and Acts.

3. Letters of advice, consolation, and hope were written to Christians who were oppressed by the Roman power: First Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation.

4. Letters of religious doctrine and suggestions for church government: Second Timothy, Titus, First Timothy, Second John, and Third John.

5. Letters and essays involving the philosophy of the Christian faith, the purpose of the ministry of Jesus, and the necessity for approved standards of conduct: James, Jude, John, Second Peter, and First John.

Methods of Study.—Three important facts concerning

each book of the New Testament must be known if it is to be well understood. These are:

1. The author and the circumstances under which he wrote.

2. The prominent features of the book.

3. The purpose and message of the book.

The mere reading of the Bible does not produce large results for the Bible student. Many individuals consider reading the entire Bible once each year an important accomplishment. True it is, some benefit may be obtained by such effort on the part of anyone. This benefit, if carefully analyzed, will be found limited to those parts which were read thoughtfully and with reverence. It is not how much we read that counts so much as how thoughtfully and how intelligently we read it. The most profound scholars, the most eloquent statesmen, and the most successful business men study the Bible.

New Testament Manuscripts and Translations.—The New Testament Canon was selected by Church officials and other qualified individuals from a large number of manuscripts which were written concerning Jesus and the rise of the Christian Church. Many of these records have been repeatedly revised in the hope that a more accurate translation of the original writings might be secured. In each revision those in charge of the work not only aimed to obtain the exact thought of the original writer, but to present it in the clearest and most accurate language. Some of those who have become familiar with the King James Version reject the American Standard Revision. This objection is largely based on the fact that the American Standard Revision does not have the exact words of certain selections they have memorized in the King James Version. In other instances the objection is based on the false assumption that the King James Version was the exact form in which God originally gave the inspired Word to men, and that any change whatsoever is sacrilege. It should be known by all who have studied the Bible, even in a superficial way, that some of it is difficult to thoroughly understand. Any effort, therefore, which is made to restate these obscure parts in a more intelligible form is a praiseworthy effort, provided, however, the individuals who attempt this task are qualified in spirit and scholarship.

Some recent efforts have been made to present the Bible

in a language which is not only modern but in some instances resembles the language of the street. A serious question arises whether this can be safely done and maintain for the Bible a sacred reverence on the part of those who read it.

QUESTIONS

1. Are the messages found in the New Testament as applicable to modern life as they were to the members of the early Church?
2. What is meant by the inspiration of the Scriptures?
3. Why is it wise to learn the authors of the different books and the circumstances under which they wrote?
4. Why is it necessary to read the Bible?
5. Name three rules which should be followed in reading the Bible.
6. Name one argument for and one against a revision of the Bible.
7. Give a specific illustration of any improvement shown in the American Standard Revision over the King James Version which indicates a greater accuracy of meaning.
8. Account for the popularity of the Bible as indicated by the large number of copies sold each year.

LESSON 41

Books of the New Testament—II

MATTHEW

Author.—Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, was employed by the Roman government as a local tax collector in Judaea. He was also known as Levi and was one of Jesus' twelve apostles. His experience with records and accounts probably qualified him in a peculiar way to write this Gospel.

Purpose.—Matthew wrote for the Hebrews and attempted to show that Jesus was in reality the King of the Jews and the Messiah promised by the Old Testament prophets. "The Kingship of Jesus" was his theme.

Prominent Features:

1. The spiritual message of Matthew is the same as that presented by both Jesus and John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."
2. Jesus is presented in this Gospel as a spiritual teacher.
3. Matthew connected the Old and the New Testaments by presenting Jesus as the Messiah of Old Testament prophecies. In doing this he quoted frequently from the Old Testament.
4. About forty per cent of the book (411 verses) consists of the words of Jesus.

MARK

Author.—Mark was a disciple of Peter and an associate of Paul on his first missionary journey. His mother's name was Mary. (Acts 12:12.)

Purpose.—Mark's purpose was to show the active and practical elements in Jesus' life. To him Jesus was an individual who constantly "went about doing good." (Mark 10:45.)

Prominent Features:

1. The spiritual message of this Gospel is an appeal to action. True faith, doctrine, and belief stimulate and control action. Jesus is presented as a doer of good deeds rather than as a philosopher or teacher.

2. Mark wrote in Rome and for the Romans. He did not refer frequently to the Old Testament for the reason that the people of Rome were not primarily interested in the Jews nor concerned with Jewish prophecy.

3. Mark's Gospel is probably more specific than any of the other Gospels. Many concrete details are given in connection with the facts related.

LUKE

Author.—Luke was born in Antioch in Syria, and was therefore not born a Jew. He was a physician and an associate of Paul on his second and third missionary journeys.

Purpose.—Luke's purpose was to confirm the truth in the mind of his friend, Theophilus. (Luke 1:3, 4.) Jesus is shown in this Gospel as the perfect man.

Prominent Features:

1. The spiritual message of Luke is, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

2. Jesus is presented as a sympathetic and merciful Saviour of the Gentile as well as of the Jew. Luke gave the unfortunate outcast a large place in the Master's consideration.

2. Theophilus, to whom this Gospel was written, was probably a Roman officer of rank and was consequently a Gentile, although some authorities consider him to have been a Greek. This Gospel, although written to an individual, is applicable to all humanity and contains not only the best literature of the New Testament, but the tenderest words for the sinner.

4. In this book the genealogy of Jesus extends not only to Adam, but to God.

5. The facts recorded by Luke are carefully selected, verified, and biographically arranged. Luke did not guess concerning anything he wrote.

JOHN

Author.—John, the Apostle, was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman, and the brother of James, who was also an Apostle. Of the three, Peter, James and John, who were special friends of Jesus, John was the youngest and probably the closest to the mind and affections of his Master. He was “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

Purpose.—The purpose of this book is indicated by the author (20:31.) “These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.”

Prominent Features:

1. The divinity of Jesus is John's theme.
2. The genealogy of Jesus, in this book, is traced back to God.
3. This Gospel, written later than the other three Gospels, contains a distinctly different list of concrete incidents. This is partly due to the fact that John's record of Jesus is largely centered on his Judæan ministry. The other three Gospels emphasize his ministry in Galilee.
4. John's intimacy with his Master brings the reader of this Gospel much closer to the spiritual element of Jesus' influence than is possible with any of the other Gospels. The authors of the four Gospels wrote their own convictions concerning Jesus. Their messages indicate the angle from which they saw him. The following table of parables and miracles suggests an interesting study of the greatest thoughts and deeds of Jesus during his ministry of three years.

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

THE MIRACLES

[illegible]

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—II

OF JESUS

LUKE	JOHN
Five thousand fed. 9 : 12	Five thousand fed. 6 : 5
Peter's mother-in-law. 4 : 38	Walking on the sea. 6 : 19
Storm pacified 8 : 22	
The demoniacs. 8 : 27	
The leper 5 : 12	
Daughter of Jairus 8 : 41	
Issue of blood 8 : 43	
The withered hand 6 : 6	
The palsied man 5 : 18	
The lunatic child. 9 : 38	
The two blind men. 18 : 35	
The demoniac 4 : 33	
The centurion's servant. 7 : 2	
Blind and dumb man. 11 : 14	
	Water made wine 2 : 1
	The nobleman's son 4 : 26
	The man at Bethesda. 5 : 2
	The man born blind 9 : 1
	Lazarus raised 11 : 32
	Multitude of fishes. 21 : 4
Disappearance of Jesus. 4 : 29	
Draught of fishes. 5 : 4	
The widow's son 7 : 12	
The infirm woman. 13 : 11	
The man with dropsy. 14 : 2	
The ten lepers 17 : 12	
Malchus healed 22 : 51	

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THE PARABLES

MATTHEW	MARK
Lamp under a bushel..... 5 : 14	Lamp under a bushel..... 4 : 21
New cloth in old garments. 9 : 16	New cloth in old garments. 2 : 21
New wine in old bottles... 9 : 17	New wine in old bottles... 2 : 22
The sower..... 13 : 3	The sower..... 4 : 2
The mustard seed..... 13 : 31	The mustard seed. 4 : 30
The vineyard..... 21 : 33	The vineyard..... 12 : 1
The fig tree..... 24 : 32	The fig tree..... 13 : 28
The tares..... 13 : 24	
The hidden treasure..... 13 : 44	
The pearl..... 13 : 45	
The net..... 13 : 47	
The unmerciful servant... 18 : 23	
Laborers in the vineyard.. 20 : 1	
The two sons..... 21 : 28	
Marriage of king's son... 22 : 2	
The ten virgins..... 25 : 1	
The talents..... 25 : 14	
The sheep and goats..... 25 : 31	
House on rock and sand... 7 : 24	
The leaven..... 13 : 33	
The lost sheep..... 18 : 12	
	Secret growing of seed..... 4 : 26
	Watchfulness..... 13 : 34

OF JESUS

LUKE	JOHN
Lamp under a bushel 8 : 16 New cloth in old garments. 5 : 36 New wine in old bottles . . . 5 : 37 The sower 8 : 5 The mustard seed 13 : 18 The vineyard 20 : 9 The fig tree 21 : 29	
House on rock and sand . . . 6 : 47 The leaven 13 : 20 The lost sheep 15 : 1	
The two debtors 7 : 41 The good Samaritan 10 : 29 The importunate friend . . . 11 : 5 The rich fool 12 : 16 The watchful servants . . . 12 : 35 The steward 12 : 42 The barren fig tree 13 : 6 The great supper 14 : 16 The tower 14 : 28 The lost piece of silver . . . 15 : 8 The prodigal son 15 : 11 The unjust steward 16 : 1 The rich man and Lazarus. 16 : 19 The master and servant. . . 17 : 7 The importunate widow . . . 19 : 1 The Pharisee and publican. 18 : 10 The pounds 19 : 12	

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

QUESTIONS

1. Name one important characteristic of each of the four Gospels.
2. State the purposes of the four Gospels in the order of their importance to modern civilization.
3. Recite one selection of the Old Testament quoted by Matthew.
4. What incident indicated friendly relationship between Peter and the family of Mark?
5. Account for the fact that the four Gospel writers emphasized different phases of Jesus' ministry and work.
6. What is meant by the word "Gospel"?
7. Which of the four Gospel writers was most prominent in the work of their Master?
8. Name four incidents in which John the Apostle was an intimate associate of Jesus.

LESSON 42

Books of the New Testament—III

ACTS

Author.—The first verse of the first chapter and the literary style of this book indicate that Luke was its author.

Purpose.—According to the author's own statement the purpose of this book was to continue the work begun in the Gospel of Luke. The author here placed before his friend Theophilus additional testimony which was intended to show that Jesus was the Messiah.

Prominent Features:

1. The Acts may be considered the second volume of Luke's Gospel.

2. The work of the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Church are emphasized.

3. The author's scholarly care is clearly shown by his selection and use of the material of this book.

4. The latter part of the book is largely a narration of Paul's life. Luke, the companion of Paul, was qualified to write this biography.

5. To Luke may be given much of the credit of placing before the people the fundamental principles of the Christian faith.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Author.—Paul, the writer of this book, was a Hebrew who, prior to his conversion, was called Saul of Tarsus. He was a scholar and a preacher of superior ability. No other individual named in the New Testament, except the Master himself, ranked higher in mental brilliancy, persis-

tence of purpose, courage of soul, and power of life, than Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

Purpose.—A Christian Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles, had been established at Rome. To these people, Paul, while stopping at Corinth on his third missionary journey, wrote this letter. His main purpose was to give them spiritual advice and comfort. His secondary purpose was to prepare the way for his visit to them.

Prominent Features:

1. This book is a comprehensive statement of theology.
2. The great fundamental principles of Christ's righteousness, redemptive power, and God's sovereign authority are here clearly presented.
3. The fundamental Christian doctrines of justification, adoption, and sanctification are also made prominent.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

Author.—Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus to the church at Corinth while on his third missionary journey. This church had been established on his second missionary journey. He had, however, not been in Corinth for three years. During his absence factions had arisen which were operating seriously against the work of the church. His counsel had evidently been sought in order that harmony might be restored.

Purpose.—Paul's purpose in this letter was to correct the faults of his fellow Christians at Corinth and to answer certain questions concerning which his advice had been asked.

Prominent Features:

1. Special effort was made to correct the party spirit in the Corinthian church.
2. Paul urged the establishment of a higher moral code which might regulate their relations with each other. He suggested the wisdom of settling their disputes within the church and not before heathen judges.
3. Emphasis was placed on the wisdom of regulating all conduct by a spiritual control. The spirit and intent of the law, together with a regard for the rights of others, was Paul's advice for social prosperity. "Love never faileth."
4. The Corinthians were advised that care should be ex-

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT—III

exercised in the proper use of spiritual gifts and that they should show an intelligent reverence for holy things.

5. A message of comfort, consolation, and final victory closes this letter.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

Author.—Paul wrote this second letter to the Corinthians within a year after he wrote the first. It was written from Macedonia. In his first letter (First Corinthians 5:9) Paul referred to a former one he had written the Corinthian church. It has, however, evidently been lost. This second letter seems to be the combination of two letters, one of rabid criticism (Second Corinthians 10-13) and the other of commendation and thanksgiving.

Purpose.—Paul's purpose was to present a defense of his missionary work and to answer his critics at Corinth. He also took occasion to commend his Christian brethren for their willingness to heed his counsel.

Prominent Features:

1. Thanksgiving for success in spiritual growth in the Corinthian church.
2. Commendation for their liberality.
3. Corinthian critics censured.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

Author.—Paul wrote this letter to the churches of Galatia. It was probably written at Antioch soon after he had completed his first missionary journey. These churches were located at Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium.

Purpose.—The purpose of Paul in writing this letter was to revitalize these Christian brethren in the faith he had taught them. Many of them had shown a marked tendency to return to the Jewish beliefs. This tendency no doubt had been encouraged by Jewish teachers who magnified obedience to the ceremonial laws of Moses rather than an acceptance of the teachings of Jesus.

Prominent Features:

1. Paul's defense of himself and his teaching (1:11-12).
2. Great emphasis is placed on freedom from the bondage of the law. Spiritual intelligence was recommended for

BIBLE STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

those who had placed their belief and confidence in the saving value of ceremonial law.

3. The author placed emphasis on the fact that salvation can be secured by faith alone.

4. The measure of the true Christian is his disposition to regulate his life by the spirit of Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

Author.—Paul had established a church at Ephesus where he had worked for a period of almost three years, while on his third missionary journey. This letter was written to his friends at Ephesus while Paul was in prison at Rome and was probably not only intended for the Ephesians but for all Christian churches to which it might be sent. Tychicus was the messenger who carried this letter to Ephesus (6:21).

Purpose.—The purpose of the writer was to counsel his brethren concerning the duties of the Christian life and to exhort them to allow the Christian spirit to become a prominent factor in their daily conduct.

Prominent Features:

1. Paul clearly explained that the Christian church was a divine institution and was established by Jesus.
2. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the mission of the church was to give light and reduce burdens.
3. Definite and practical directions were given for those who would allow the Christian faith to dominate their lives.
4. Directions were also given for both defense and attack against evil.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Author.—Ten years before this letter was written Paul had established a church at Philippi while on his second missionary journey. To this church, the first Christian church in Europe, Paul wrote this letter while a prisoner at Rome. Epaphroditus, one of its leading members, had carried a gift to Paul from his brethren. While at Rome he became ill and was nursed back to health by Paul. When the messenger had sufficiently recovered, Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter.

Purpose.—Paul encouraged his brethren at Philippi concerning his own safety, and exhorted them to continue in the faith.

Important Features:

1. Joy, and thanksgiving, for God's goodness.
 2. No clearer statement of the Christian's joy, and the cause of it, can be found than in this letter of Paul to the church at Philippi.
 3. Joy and the largest life can come only to those whose lives are controlled and sustained by a substantial faith in Christ and his religion.
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QUESTIONS

1. Name two prominent characteristics of Peter and two of Paul.
2. In what two ways was Paul particularly qualified for the work of his ministry?
3. Who were the Gentiles?
4. What is meant by the "doctrines of the Christian faith"?
5. Why should any conscientious individual criticize or penalize one for doing the work which Paul did?
6. Name two others in Old Testament history who were severely punished for doing what they considered to be their duty.
7. Was Paul easily embarrassed in the presence of his critics?
8. Why should Paul's judgment and belief be accepted by anyone in preference to the beliefs of the Jews?
9. Name three elements of Paul's faith that were not readily accepted by the Jews.
10. What was meant by the *ceremonial law*?

LESSON 43

Books of the New Testament—IV

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Author.—Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned at Rome. It was carried to the church at Colossae by Tychicus, a “beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.”

Purpose.—Paul had not established the church at Colossae nor had he visited it. His interest in its welfare, however, was not lessened by these facts. He had learned that the Christians at Colossae were not only returning to the Jewish faith in the ceremonial law, but that they had begun to give heed to certain false teachers who were active among them. To correct this condition was Paul’s motive in writing this letter.

Prominent Features:

1. Paul emphasized the spiritual liberty of Christ’s teachings as against a blind and formal observance of the ceremonial law.
2. The person and significance of Christ were exalted.
3. Warnings were given against false teaching.
4. The Colossians were exhorted to remain faithful in their doctrinal convictions that God was the Creator of all things, and that Christ was the divine Redeemer.

FIRST AND SECOND THESSALONIANS

Author.—The church at Thessalonica was the second church Paul had established in Europe. These letters were written by Paul when he was at Corinth.

Purpose.—While at Thessalonica Paul had been severely criticized and persecuted. In consequence of this harsh treatment he considered it wise to leave the city. Reports of the progress of the Thessalonian church were brought to Paul by Silas and Timothy. The first of these two

letters was written when Timothy reported to Paul at Corinth. Its purpose was to encourage them in their faith and to defend his own teaching. Paul specifically referred to the second coming of Christ, and unconsciously furnished his critics at Thessalonica an opportunity for friction and diversion.

When Paul learned of this unfortunate condition he immediately wrote a second letter in which he attempted to quiet their fears and to increase their spiritual intelligence concerning some of the important features of immortality and Christ's second coming.

Prominent Features:

1. Thanksgiving.
2. The certainty of Christ's second coming.
3. Consideration given both the dead and the living at Christ's second coming.
4. Time of Christ's second coming uncertain.
5. Paul's exhortation to remain faithful.

FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

Author.—Paul was evidently in Macedonia when he wrote this letter to his young disciple Timothy who was at that time pastor of the church at Ephesus. Timothy's home town was Lystra, where Paul had been stoned and where he probably came under Paul's influence.

Purpose.—Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was to counsel Timothy concerning the danger of false doctrine on the part of certain Jews and to fortify him against the subtle religious beliefs of Gentile, or pagan, teachers. His second purpose was to advise Timothy concerning church government.

Prominent Features:

1. Paul's advice concerning false teaching of Jews and pagans.
2. The importance of prayer.
3. Church officers and their duties.
4. Church doctrine.

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

Author.—Paul was again in prison at Rome when he wrote this letter. The end of his life and ministry seemed to him not far off.

Purpose.—Interests touching on Church doctrines and false teaching did not seem to concern Paul in this letter. As he waited to be offered, and as he stood almost in the shadow of his execution, he advised Timothy to be faithful to his trust.

Prominent Features:

1. Personal counsel and exhortation.
2. A request that Timothy come to him.
3. Eloquent review of his life's work.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

Author.—Titus, a disciple of Paul, had begun to organize the Christian church on the island of Crete. Paul, while in Macedonia, wrote him this letter of counsel and instruction.

Purpose.—The purpose of this letter is similar to Paul's first letter to Timothy and was probably written at about the same time.

Prominent Features:

1. Evil influence of "vain talkers and deceivers."
2. Titus was directed to ordain church officers of good character in every city.
3. Instructions concerning church doctrine.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

Author.—Philemon was a Christian man of influence in Colossae. One of his slaves, Onesimus by name, had deserted his master and had found his way to Rome, a city of attraction for many of no better character. Here he came under the influence of Paul and was converted to a better life. On advice from Paul he returned to his master with this letter.

Purpose.—Paul's purpose in writing to Philemon was to appeal to him as a Christian brother on behalf of Onesimus.

Prominent Features:

1. The equality of Christian brethren.
2. Paul's willingness to sacrifice himself or his possessions for the cause of justice.
3. A subtle blow at slavery.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by spiritual liberty as opposed to the mere formal observance of law?'
2. What was the nature of the false teaching concerning which Paul warned many of his disciples?
3. What doctrine did Paul consider important to the Christian faith?
4. What feature of Christ's second coming seemed to annoy the Thessalonians?
5. Name four important principles of Christian doctrine most frequently emphasized by Paul.
6. Name two dangers which threaten the modern Church which are suggested by the advice given by Paul to his disciples.
7. Name two qualities of Paul's mind which are shown by his letter to Philemon.
8. What statement of the author indicates that he had a conscience void of offense before God?

LESSON 44

Books of the New Testament—V

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Author.—Neither the author of this letter nor the location of the Hebrews to whom it was written is known. It is possible that it was written to the Jewish people in general and not to a particular group or church. Nothing in the original manuscript indicates that Paul was the author, as some have supposed, and the literary style of this letter indicates very definitely that he was not the author.

Purpose.—The purpose of this letter is to harmonize the teachings of Christ with the teachings of the Mosaic law. The Old Dispensation was, to Paul's mind, fulfilled in the New.

Prominent Features:

1. This letter, by a logical and systematic presentation, shows Christ's teachings to be a culmination of Old Testament faith.
2. Christ, through his incarnation and death, had reached the point toward which the altar and the ceremonial law had been pointing.
3. This treatise or letter is a condensed form of the progressive revelation of God as it is found in the entire Bible.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Author.—The author of this letter was probably James, the son of Alphaeus. It was written at Jerusalem, the home of St. James. Like the Epistle to the Hebrews, it was evidently intended for the entire Christian church.

Purpose.—Its purpose differed essentially from the letters written by Paul. James taught that the quality of an individual's faith may be measured by the character of his

life, and the righteousness of his deeds. He did not minimize the necessity of faith, but he challenged faith to show its vitality in good works. Not less spirituality but more practical Christianity and a higher type of morality, is his theme.

Prominent Features:

1. Warning against temptations of riches and deceivers.
2. To be a child of Abraham and to formally obey the ceremonial law of Moses are without value unless supplemented by godliness.
3. Advice to his fellow Christians touching the varied experiences of daily life.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

Author.—Peter wrote this letter from Rome to his fellow workers and to all who needed encouragement.

Purpose.—Peter's purpose in this letter was to urge his brethren to make use of Christ's sustaining power under conditions of suffering and persecution. Being conscious that he was near his tragic end, he was therefore anxious to speak concerning God's power and mercy. He had experienced both.

Prominent Features:

1. The writer exhorted his fellow workers to maintain their faith and to persevere in godliness even under stress of persecution and trial.
2. Emphasis was placed on the value of God's sustaining power for the difficulties of active service.
3. Elders were exhorted to remain faithful to their trust and responsibility.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

Author.—This letter also was probably written by Peter.

Purpose.—The writer's predominant purpose was to counsel his fellow workers to beware of traitors and false teachers among their own number.

Prominent Features:

1. Christians were encouraged in perseverance.
2. A warning was issued against false prophets that appear in sheep's clothing.

3. The hope of Christ's second coming and a blessed immortality were suggested as a reward for the faithful.

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD JOHN

Author.—Although there is no definite proof as to the writer of these three letters, yet much evidence exists to show that their author was the apostle John. These letters were probably the last written messages of the Holy Scriptures, although they are not placed last in our Bibles.

Purpose.—The evident purpose of the writer was to correct evil practices, to emphasize the dependability of faith, and to teach the necessity and value of love.

Prominent Features:

FIRST JOHN

1. Definitions of God.
2. Hatred of sin is the measure of the Christian's life.
3. Faith is rewarded by eternal life.

SECOND JOHN

1. Brotherly love was suggested to all who believed in Christ.
2. The danger of false teachers.

THIRD JOHN

1. Workers and supporters of Christianity were commended. Gaius, to whom this letter was written, was one of them.
2. Fierce denunciations were hurled at anyone who dared to operate against Christ's program for the world or to persecute one of God's ministers. Diotrephes was attempting to commercialize his church influence for selfish purposes and was therefore named by John in his fiery rebuke.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

Author.—The author of this letter was Jude, the brother of James.

Purpose.—Jude's purpose was to warn his fellow-work-

ers against false teachers and to exhort them to greater faith and energy in Christian service.

Prominent Features:

1. This letter is very similar to Second Peter. Compare this letter of Jude with Second Peter 2.
2. Jude quoted from certain apocryphal books and, in this particular, differed from all other New Testament writers.
3. Warning against false teachers.
4. Exhortations.

REVELATION

Author.—The author of Revelation, the only prophetic book of the New Testament, was probably the Apostle John.

Purpose.—Immediately preceding and following the coming of Christ into the world, the political relationship of the Jews to the surrounding nations was at such a tension that any writing which was done by Jews was liable to close scrutiny by such powers as Rome and her competitors. In consequence of this, many manuscripts were written in such figurative language that, although the Jewish people might understand, yet inquisitive and hostile minds would be unable to get the full force of what was written. Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament are two such books. This accounts for many figurative expressions in Revelation which have perplexed many Bible scholars who have sought to interpret their meaning.

Prominent Features:

1. Letters to the seven churches.
2. The five visions.
3. The failure of the Roman nation.
4. Satan bound.
5. Christ's coming.
6. The final judgment.
7. The new heaven and the new earth.
8. The Holy City.
9. Invitation.

QUESTIONS

1. Name one important feature of the Epistle of James which modern Christians should keep prominently in mind.

2. What is meant by "Christ's incarnation"?

3. Are false teachers found in the modern church? If so, how may the falsity of their teaching be recognized or determined?

4. Do modern Christians suffer trials and persecutions which are in any way similar to those experienced by such men as Paul and Peter?

5. Name one prominent element to be found in the teaching of each of the following: Paul, James, and John.

6. What is meant by the apocryphal books?

7. Name one prominent difference between the teaching of the Old Testament and that of the New.

8. Were the writers of the Bible probably conscious of the meaning and value of their writings to following generations?

LESSON 45

The Literature of the New Testament

SUGGESTIVE FACTS

1. Only four distinct forms of literature are found in the New Testament. These are the Parable, Essay, Oration, and Letters.

2. Each of the eight authors of the New Testament had certain personal characteristics which show in his writings.

3. The source of inspiration for all New Testament writers was the message of Jesus concerning the kingdom of God.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHORS

Matthew.—Matthew wrote for the Jews. A special interest in the Jewish ritual of worship, Jewish traditions, and the fulfilment of prophecy characterizes his work.

Mark.—Mark differed essentially from Matthew in that his message was directed primarily to the Gentiles. Logical order, form, and conclusiveness of argument were sacrificed by Mark in his enthusiasm to present his message.

Luke.—Luke had a more excellent literary style than any of the gospel writers. He was scholarly in his taste, artistic in his style, and rational in his analysis of facts. Concrete facts held a large place in Luke's mind. His observations were accurate.

John.—John was a philosopher. He interpreted the facts and messages of Jesus in terms of spiritual principles which guide and control conduct. His spiritual appreciation,

his imagery, and his gentleness of nature give to his writings great power.

Paul.—The rugged and energetic nature of Paul shows prominently in all his writings. His passionate oratory is matched by the logical coherence of his argument and the forceful simplicity of his diction. Paul's writings rank with the best in literature in sublimity of thought.

James.—Many of James' writings are essays in which a careful analysis and exposition of the truth is most prominent.

Peter.—An impulsive devotion mark the writings of Peter. The energy of his thought was ballasted with a surprising fluency of style.

Jude.—The letter of Jude is a frank and unbiased presentation of facts. His earnestness in combating the internal friction he found in the Church submerged all effort for literary styles.

1. The Parable.—The parable is a brief narrative which is based on nature or human action. No more effective method of presenting the truth can be used. It was an important factor in all of Jesus' teaching. All great teachers illustrate.

a. The Rich Man and Lazarus. Luke 16:19-31. Short words, direct statements, and vivid imagery mark this parable. If each sentence is read separate and aloud, its force and beauty may more readily be seen.

b. The Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37. The narrative here given stimulates interest and conceals the momentum of the parable until its entire force is released. This type of parable was well adapted to the lawyer for whom it was spoken. No argument, questions, or misunderstanding followed the presentation of this parable.

c. The Parable of the Kingdom. Matthew 13:44-48. The force of this triple parable is found in the keen analogies that are made between the kingdom of God and the private thoughts and experiences of the common people. No imperfect or far-fetched comparisons are found here. Figures of speech add to its simplicity.

d. The Pharisee and the Publican. Luke 18:9-14. The

source of power in this parable is found in its realism, its vivid contrasts, and its concreteness. It struck the mark at which it was aimed. No abstract principles are given. The characters are named and their words accurately recited.

2. Essay.—An essay is a systematic presentation of a particular phase of some subject.

a. Temptation. James 1:12-27. The strength of this essay is found in its concrete references to sin and the logical unity found in its analysis. Such expressions as lust, wrath, filthiness, face, mirror and "bridleth not his tongue" add interest, clearness, and vigor.

b. Wisdom. James 3:13-18. This essay is a brief and concise development of the nature and source of true wisdom. Words accomplish here what sentences often fail to do in many essays. This essay covers both negative and positive sides of the subject. The contrast is effective.

c. Faith and Works. James 2:14-26. Note the force of the questions with which this essay begins. Specific instances are given in rapid succession. The vividness of this essay is strengthened by the final verse in which the argument is given by imagery.

3. Oration.—An oration is an address in which the speaker attempts to convince those who hear.

a. To an Unknown God. Acts 17:22-31. The dignity and directness of this oration are not commonplace. The subtlety of Paul's argument was possible only because of the flawless logic he used. Paul equalled the philosophy of the Greeks in his arrangement of facts in this oration.

b. Farewell to the Elders of Ephesus. Acts 20:17-35. This oration is characterized by Paul's emotional appeal to his assistants at Ephesus. Responsibility, devotion, and consecration are made vivid by personal reference to his own experiences. A keen appreciation of a spiritual urge is revealed by his passionate plea to commit all to the guiding power of the Holy Spirit. The expression of an intimate personal affection adds force to Paul's argument.

c. Paul's Defense before Felix. Acts 24:10-25. Ex-

cluding the words of Jesus, few orations in all literature include so much of logical beauty and superb diction as this defense of Paul. The phrasing of his sentences cannot be improved and the accumulating force of his argument is convincing. His use of the climax is noteworthy.

4. Letters.—The letter is a form of writing in which an effort is made, by personal references, to reveal, interpret, and guide human activity. Sincerity and concreteness characterize all good letters.

a. Love. First Corinthians 13. The imagery and diction of this letter are superior. Note the vividness of such analogies as "I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." His parallel comparisons add fluency and rhythm to the force of his figures of speech.

b. Immortality. First Corinthians 15. The coherence and sublimity of this letter are its most prominent qualities. Note that the first word of each verse is generally a preposition or a conjunction. Paul's energetic spirit could not easily submerge argument in this letter. This force supports its beauty.

c. To Philemon. Paul's interpretation of life relationships is beautifully brought to the surface in this letter. It is probably the most thorough-bred letter found in the Bible. The personal touch is carefully blended with philosophy, and the general effect suggests a devotional intimacy which is impressive.

QUESTIONS

1. Name three qualities of a good letter.
2. What author in the New Testament probably ranks highest as a writer of good literature?
3. Characterize four of the eight authors of the New Testament.
4. What is a philosopher?
5. a. What is the distinct purpose of a parable?
b. Name five parables of the New Testament.

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6. a. What is the distinct purpose of an oration?
b. Name five orations of the New Testament.
7. Which of the four forms of writing found in the New Testament is most interesting?
8. What value do imagery, coherence, and good diction attach to any writing?

LESSON 46

Membership in the Kingdom

Text: Genesis 2: 15-17, 8: 20; Exodus 3: 7-10; John 3: 16, 3: 3; Matthew 6: 33; John 18: 36.

Source of Information.—The messages of Jesus constitute the source of all information concerning the kingdom of God. One of the distinct purposes of his earthly ministry was to establish a kingdom for the salvation of souls. The principles on which this kingdom was builded may be grouped in four divisions:

1. Membership in the kingdom.
2. Development of the kingdom.
3. Rights and responsibilities of membership.
4. Examination of the final records of the members "when the books are opened."

All of these principles may be accurately studied from the parables of Jesus.

"All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them."

Opportunities Given.—God presented to our first parents the rights and privileges of membership in his kingdom. The only requirement he imposed on them was obedience. They and many of their descendents ignored his counsel and disobeyed his commandments.

Later, God presented a similar opportunity to Noah and his family. When they came from the ark after the deluge, they first built an altar for worship. They started well. Very soon, however, they began to stray from God's guidance and refused to follow his leadership.

At another time God commanded Moses to lead a selected people from bondage in Egypt to a land most favorable for their growth and development. Not only was a special leader appointed to protect them and their interests, but special laws were given for their guidance and direction. Again they departed from him and wandered into sin.

At a later time, God continued to be merciful and "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."

The world has not properly estimated the opportunities God has given. Many, by their indifference, disobedience, and spiritual neglect have severed their membership in his kingdom. They have wandered into the darkness and are lost.

Lost.—Misfortune or carelessness is generally suggested by the word "lost." Few experiences bring greater regret, sadness, and anguish of soul than the consciousness of being lost. The burden is no lighter for friends and loved ones. Men will work without food and sleep to find a little child who has strayed away. Few experiences could stimulate Mary to forget everything and to walk the streets of Jerusalem with tear-dimmed eyes that marked nothing but the features of her lost son. Words were feeble to express her emotions in the temple at Jerusalem when she was permitted to clasp to her bosom again her lost boy. What is true in the physical world is still more frightfully true in the zone of the spirit.

Salvation for the Lost.—Jesus gave to all humanity a plan of redemption and salvation. Not only did he make it possible for the lost to be saved to his kingdom, but he taught his disciples that their peculiar responsibility as his followers was to lead men and women from darkness to light and from sin to righteousness. The purpose of the Church, the mission of all true disciples, and the necessity for the cross on Calvary were to redeem lost souls.

The Lost Sheep.—Luke 15:3-7. "It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

When Jesus spoke this parable to the Pharisees and scribes, he thoroughly understood their attitude toward eating with sinners. He knew equally well that they were selfish egotists

and refused to welcome either Gentiles or sinners to their exclusive group.

"And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

Jesus considered all sinners lost to his kingdom. In his personal work and in his teaching, he recognized the necessity of going "after that which is lost." He emphasized this fact when he said, "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." In this pastoral story, Jesus made clear to the shepherd-trained Jews his great desire to bring those who were lost in sin back into his kingdom, by reminding them of the joy that comes when a lost sheep has been found. "Even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." A human soul is better than a sheep.

The Great Supper.—Luke 14:16-24. Jesus knew the temporary pleasures of humankind. He knew men were willing to sever their relationship with the kingdom of God, betray their Lord, and sell their immortal souls for a piece of gold. He knew man's tendency to excuse himself for sins he had committed, and his eagerness to find a half-excuse for doing what his sinful nature urged him to do. He knew that spiritual motives of humility, devotion, and loyalty were prominent in the souls of those who would follow him with sincerity of purpose. He also knew that the hypocritical pretenses of the scribes and Pharisees were not in harmony with the principles of righteousness. Regardless of these facts, Jesus was anxious that all men should know the divine provision which had been made in his kingdom for sinners. He therefore presented to them the parable of the great supper. He did not omit to emphasize, however, that a time comes when it is too late to accept invitations.

Both the messages of Jesus and the experiences of human life teach the value of full membership in God's kingdom. There is no other solution for the perplexing problems of life and there is no other hope in the hour of darkness.

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on;
Keep thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me."

Attitude Toward God's Kingdom.—Education, environment, and sincerity of purpose, determine the attitudes of individuals toward the kingdom of God and the guiding power of the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God is not an exclusive organization requiring a large bank account, a peculiar dialect, the rustle of silk, or a blue-blooded ancestry. An invitation is given to *all* who will *accept Jesus* as their Saviour and control their lives by his spirit. Not all people have accepted the invitation.

The Father and His Two Sons.—Matthew 21:28-31. "But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

Membership in the kingdom of God can be secured and retained by obedience and not by profession alone. The first son would have done well if he had been respectful to his father. He did well, however, that he obeyed. Church membership, official recognition, large professions, and a pious exterior will save no man.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

The Sower and the Seed.—Luke 8:5-8. Although God's invitation is open for acceptance to all who are willing to follow him, yet many individuals either consciously or unconsciously erect barriers which block their entrance to his kingdom. The plan God has provided is able to save any who are lost, regardless of the character of their guilt or the heinousness of their sin. The individual, however, is not without responsibility. Three specific duties must be performed:

1. Faith, the study of God's law, and prayer must be used to secure the fortifying power of the Holy Spirit against temptation.

2. All doubtful thoughts and conduct must be resented.

3. Care should be used that worldly interests do not replace devotion to God. Christian service is the best insurance for such devotion.

Seed is meant to grow. Every form of life has been brought into existence for a distinct purpose. When it fulfils

this purpose it has been successful. When it fails to meet this obligation it has been a failure. Jesus said the great function and purpose of human life was to love God and our fellowmen. Individuals can grow toward a realization of this life purpose only by entering the service of the kingdom of God. He is wise who makes his life fruitful, renders his community a better place in which to live, and avoids those destructive influences which prompt disobedience and lead downward to failure, regret, and sorrow.

The Rich Man.—Luke 12:16-21. ‘And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee.’

Some foolish individuals forget God and measure their lives by their own standard. They find difficulty in learning that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he happens to possess. They do not seem to realize that the mansions in eternal glory are constructed from the material sent on ahead, and that this material is faith, obedience, and service. An individual may have time on the earth to obey and serve. He may not have much time. The rich man had made his plans for many years. God told him that on that very night the books of his life would be closed.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the kingdom of God?
2. How may an individual qualify for membership in God's kingdom?
3. State three values derived from such membership.
4. State briefly the plan of redemption presented by Jesus.
5. May an individual be certain of his eternal salvation?
6. In what particular were the Pharisees and scribes most deficient in their spiritual life? Were they conscious of their deficiency? Explain.
7. Name three influences which operate most seriously against the growth of the kingdom of God.
8. State, in a logical order, the steps necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

LESSON 47

Development of the Kingdom

Text: Galatians 6:7; Revelation 3:20-22; Matthew 7:21,
13:24-32, 47-50.

Nature of God's Kingdom.—The kingdom of God is not a national state or a political organization. Many of the Jews expected Jesus would establish such a kingdom and free them from Roman domination. They were disappointed. The kingdom of God does not depend for its success and power on trained soldiers, merchant ships, or a diplomatic service. It is a spiritual condition in the human soul from which comes a ready obedience to divine law, and a devotional consecration to God's service. "The kingdom of God is within you."

Such a condition of life may be attained by any sinner if and when he is willing to eliminate sin from his thoughts and conduct, accept the leadership of Jesus, and conform his life to the will of God. He must be willing to turn from his sin and live in harmony with the laws of righteousness. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is promised to all who sincerely desire such a quality of life.

In the varied experiences of human conduct, some things are primary. Other things have only secondary importance. It is essential that the principles Jesus taught shall become the individual's guide in his daily experiences, if true happiness in this world is to be secured. It is equally important that the divine plan of redemption shall be accepted in sincerity of faith, if joy in the land of eternal glory is ever to be realized. When such fundamental facts have been given their proper place, other less important factors will readily adjust themselves.

"But seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

A Gradual Process.—The development of the kingdom of God in the human soul is a gradual process. Habits of life develop slowly. Quality of thought, like the personality shown in the human face, cannot entirely change in a night. True it is, Saul of Tarsus suddenly changed his life program in the purifying light that came from Almighty God on the Damascus road. There were, however, in Saul's inner consciousness, certain elements of justice and righteousness that needed only the stimulating power of God's guiding hand to transform him from a persecutor of the Church to a true disciple who could finish his course and keep the faith.

A spiritual vision is impossible for those who are not qualified to see. Not all people are able to see "books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." Some people see little in the Christian religion, but sacrifice and gloom. They believe that to forsake their sordid interests and accept the teachings of Jesus, is to exchange a life of pleasure for a program of distasteful piety. Their standard of measurement is defective and their sense of appreciation is undeveloped. Thoughtful men do not measure their joys and their pleasures by the same standard they used in childhood. They have "put away childish things" and have enlarged their vision. They have become more interested in the beauty of landscape and sky than in the mud and scum by the roadside. They have become able to discern between what is great and what is only trivial. Such ability and such a vision are not the result of an accident, but the product of a persistent and conscious effort to follow the plan of the Great Architect for humanity.

The Mustard Seed.—Matthew 13:31-32. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof."

By presenting this parable, Jesus taught those who were gathered on the shore of Lake Galilee four important facts concerning his kingdom.

The kingdom must have a beginning in the human soul. Neither the principles Jesus taught nor the kingdom of God

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can help any man who refuses to accept divine leadership and who repulses all agencies intended to purify his life. The mustard seed would have remained dormant until this hour if it had not been permitted to enter the soil. The soil was the proper place for the mustard seed. The kingdom of God is meant for the human soul.

Spiritual growth may develop from a small beginning. It is not essential that a sinner shall first become righteous before God is willing to enter his life. Some have traveled so far down the wide road to destruction that, to them, a return to God seems impossible. They have ignored the counsel and advice of godly parents, they have possibly scoffed at God's law, spurned the Church, and, with their eyes wide open, have willingly walked in paths they should have shunned. Regardless of the heinousness of their guilt, and notwithstanding the fact that they have sinned against light and truth, God is willing to receive them as his children. The prodigal son asked his father for his share of the inheritance, he left home, he wasted his substance with riotous living, and at last went into the fields to feed swine before he was able to see facts in their proper relationship. When he came to himself, however, he said, "I will arise and go to my father." God, like the father of this unwise boy, is willing to meet the sinner on his return home. The sinner in his deepest sin needs only to accept Jesus as his Saviour and Guide. From this initial step and with this small beginning, the kingdom of God will grow.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

"Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come."

Favorable conditions of growth are necessary. It is useless to plant any seed in arid land. Fruit trees and rose bushes do not grow in deserts. The kingdom of God cannot aid human life unless conditions in the individual soul are made favorable for its development. Christian service must replace sin. Communion with God must be obtained through prayer.

God's power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are available for immediate use when any individual is willing to place his life under divine control. When such spiritual conditions have been established, the growth of the kingdom of God may be expected.

The kingdom of God always brings rewards to human life. The mustard seed, from a small beginning, became a substantial tree capable of furnishing rest and protection for birds in their flight. To him who has accepted Christ's plan of redemption and has submitted his life to the leadership of the divine will, blessing, happiness, and contentment will come in this world, and, in the life beyond, a glorious immortality is assured. Not only will personal joy and satisfaction be realized, but a life thus controlled will be a blessing and a benediction to all humankind.

The Tares.—Matthew 13:24-30. "Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away."

Human life must obey the law of compensation. What a man receives will be proportional to the price he pays. The tree that is able to push its leaves up to the sunlight will grow; all others must die. The chick that has not sufficient strength to peck its way out of the shell, has not sufficient strength to live. Flowers must struggle against weeds, and wheat against tares.

Every good motive and every righteous impulse will find evil barriers on every side. These must be overcome. The energy necessary for success in the struggle stimulates growth and power for future efforts. One evil overcome will fortify for the next conflict. A conscience, once quieted and coerced, will not make so loud a protest when the next temptation presents itself. The struggle goes on. The battle of righteousness with sin and of good with evil will continue as long as life exists.

"There is an unseen battle field
In every human breast:
Where two opposing forces meet
And where they seldom rest."

Only God can give the victory. The best efforts of hu-

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manity must rely on divine power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, if the human soul is to be guided wisely and safely through the perplexing problem of living well each day. The final victory is promised to those who trust God and follow his precepts. Every man should do what every man can do. God expects as much, and no more. There is not only compensation of life for the good, but there is the compensation of death for the evil.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

The Net.—Matthew 13:47-50. "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which when it was filled, they drew up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away."

The kingdom of heaven is open to all who desire to enter. Not only are its benefits and privileges available for those who are willing to follow the leadership of Jesus, but each one is invited to make use of the opportunity. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne."

The man who, in sincerity of faith, accepts the divine program of life, will find the power of the Holy Spirit able to control his conduct and determine his choices. Large professions and a pious pretense, when not supported by quality of life and consecration of purpose, have no merit in the kingdom of God and will show weak in the final test. "Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Conviction of sin, acceptance of Jesus as a personal Saviour, and subjection of the life to the guiding power of the Holy Spirit, is the only formula by the use of which the largest values of God's kingdom may be secured. Gloom, defeat, and disaster await those who attempt to substitute a selfish program for God's plan. No man is forced to enter the kingdom of God. His development therein is optional. Every man is free to choose. He must, however,

decide for or against the vital factors of his own life. The quality and character of his choice will one day be revealed.

"So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire."

Those who accept the invitation of salvation which Jesus gave to all mankind, and who build their characters according to the blue-print of the divine Architect, will find stability, comfort, and happiness not only in this world but when the accounts of life are closed. "For God will bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the best assurance that the kingdom of God is present in any soul?
2. Did any of Jesus' disciples understand what he meant by his kingdom?
3. What relation does evangelism bear to the kingdom of God?
4. Does joining the Church indicate entrance into the kingdom of God?
5. For what part of an individual's salvation is he alone responsible?
6. Who are represented by the fish that entered the net but were finally rejected?
7. Does the parable of *the tares* teach that an individual should separate himself from an evil environment? Explain.
8. Name three benefits which come in this life to those who establish the kingdom of God in their own souls.

LESSON 48

Responsibilities and Privileges of Citizenship in the Kingdom of God

Text: Luke 14:28-33, 18:10-14; Matthew 16:26, 25:14-30,
13:6-9, 25:1-13.

The Cost.—"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it."

The kingdom of righteousness is in direct opposition to the kingdom of evil. No man can retain citizenship in both kingdoms. Allegiance to one means that allegiance to the other must be severed. "No man can serve two masters."

Man's interests indicate his choice of life and his estimate of values. The investor of money or the manufacturer of goods will sometimes endanger his health, sacrifice his friendships, and even cripple his conscience, in order that he may double his wealth and increase his power. No cost seems too great for him whose quest is for gold or goods that may leave him in a day or be taken from him in a night. If men of normal mind are willing to use their time and sacrifice their lives for goods which perish in their hands, what should they not be willing to give for those values which increase with time, and which continue throughout eternity? The kingdoms of the world were offered to Jesus on the mountain top on condition that he would pay for them in terms of worship at the devil's shrine. The cost was too great.

"For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

Purity of life, an unfettered conscience, personal happiness, contentment of mind, and the assurance of a glorious im-

mortality, are offered to him who is willing to forsake sin, accept Christ as his personal Saviour, and conform his life to the will of God. It is wise to count the cost.

The Talents.—Ability is given for use. The unused arm withers, while the arm of the smith is developing crushing power. This fact Jesus made plain to his disciples in the parable of the talents.

Before leaving home for a far country, a certain man called his servants together and entrusted to them his goods. "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability." During the master's absence the one who had received five talents used his good judgment as well as his money, and was able to deliver ten talents to his master when he returned. In like manner the man who had received two talents was able to double his holdings. He who had received but one talent came to his master in his fear and shame, and said, "I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth."

To those who had made good use of their time and had sensibly assumed their responsibility, the master said, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things." They had met their obligations courageously, performed their duties thoughtfully, and were ready for commendation and promotion.

To the slothful servant to whom one talent had been given, came the awful words, "Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He had failed to see anything in life but pleasure and indolence. He had been indifferent to his duty and neglectful of his responsibility. He had ignored wise counsel and spurned the precepts of his superiors. He had closed his eyes to the great fact, shining forth from every page of life, that he who meets his daily problems and his opportunities with courage and the approval of his better judgment, will receive a just reward.

He learned too late that, "the wages of sin is death."

"In life's small things be resolute and great
To keep thy muscle trained; know'st thou when Fate
Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to thee,
'I find thee worthy; do this deed for me?'"

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The Barren Fig Tree.—Mercy is the highest type of justice.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the vine dresser, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none; cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? And he answered and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down."

To every man is given an opportunity to render a service to God and to humanity. No man can live unto himself. What he is, what he does, and what he thinks, will operate to bless or blight the lives of those with whom he lives, and will mark for good or ill the lives of those who follow him. The period of one's life is no idle pastime. It does not consist in selecting "snap courses" in college, nor finding the line of least resistance in the world of business or in affairs of religion. Life means production: not the production of gold or superficial amusement, but the production of those spiritual values which will show in faith, happiness, charity, obedience, and reverence. These values abide forever. The owner of the vineyard was merciful and patient with his fig tree. God is equally merciful and patient with sinners. It should be remembered, however, that God's mercy cannot be abused.

"God's mercy is a holy mercy, which knows how to pardon sin, not to protect it; it is a sanctuary for the penitent, not for the presumptuous."

Prayer and Humility.—Wicked men, who find themselves helpless in the presence of danger and death, will pray. It is well God is willing to hear such tardy prayers. It is better to be in such close communion with God that his almighty power may be constantly used to guide in the complex problems of daily life.

Prayer makes no appeal before the throne of God unless offered in the sincerity and faith of purpose.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of

all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner."

The phylacteries which decorated the forehead and left arm of the egotistic Pharisee, his long cloak with its glittering fringes, and his words of self-praise only advertised his hypocrisy. The pullican, ashamed of his sin and conscious of his own imperfection, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but pleaded earnestly for God's mercy.

"I say unto you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Jesus repeatedly presented this principle of humility to his disciples. It is one of the great laws in the kingdom of God. Happy is he who develops such a spirit.

"They that know God will be humble: they that know themselves cannot be proud."

The Ten Virgins.—It is not enough that the individual who would properly assume the responsibilities and enjoy the privileges of membership in God's kingdom shall count the cost, use his talents in Christian service, and maintain a prayerful and humble spirit. He must also keep his life in such harmony with God's will that he will be ready when his Lord comes.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish and five were wise. For the foolish when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." At midnight when the approach of the bridegroom was announced, those who were wise were prepared to meet him, but the foolish virgins ran in confusion about the streets in their efforts to buy oil. When the bridegroom came, those that were ready, "went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut." After a short time the foolish virgins returned and made a pathetic appeal for admission. The glowing lights and joyous voices within only intensified their desire to share the joyous festival with their friends. In response to repeated efforts to gain admission, there came to them from within those fateful words, "Verily,

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I say unto you, I know you not." Shut out in the darkness with their sorrow and regret, they had time and opportunity to painfully realize their mistake. They were too late.

Happy is he who uses the opportunities Jesus has provided for entrance and membership in his kingdom, and who is ready to close his earthly service with the approval of the Master when he comes.

"Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

QUESTIONS

1. Name three important factors which must be considered in estimating the cost of Christian service.
2. When is conscience a dependable guide for conduct?
3. Do individuals have equal capacities at birth?
4. Is an individual responsible for talents he has not developed but which he could have developed, if he had used properly his opportunities?
5. Why should an individual develop his talents if such development will bring to him additional responsibility?
6. Is Christian service expected of every man, regardless of his talents?
7. Name three qualities of effective prayer.
8. Is it possible for the same individual to have a substantial faith in God and at the same time refuse to render Christian service?

LESSON 49

When the Books are Opened

Text : Revelation 20 : 12-15 ; Second Corinthians 6 : 2 ; Matthew 7 : 24-27, 25 : 31-46 ; First Corinthians 3 : 11-14 ; Ecclesiastes 12 : 13.

Stewardship of Life.—All opportunities for entrance to and service in the kingdom of God are limited to the period of human life.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

When death comes the books are closed. Good intentions, praiseworthy resolutions, and noble ambitions are valuable only as they have stimulated the individual to realize them during the moment of his earthly activity. Every man will stand before God’s judgment seat as death finds him. No change of character, no increase of devotion, and no remission of sin follows death. Fortunate is he who works, “while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.”

“Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

The Builder.—He who would build his life with the same intelligence he uses when he builds with wood and stone, must follow the directions Jesus gave for human life. In his attempt to make this fact clear to his disciples, he said, “Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock : and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon the rock.”

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Every life will be tested. None will escape. It is not only wise but necessary that both the foundation of character and the material that finds its way into the life structure shall be sufficiently strong to meet the test of time and eternity.

"Each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is."

Unfortunate is that man who closes his eyes to the truth and does not see the vital factors of life in their proper relationship. More unfortunate is he who rejects the program of life and the plan of salvation which Jesus came into the world to present. Such a man is building his house upon the sand. The rain, the floods, and the wind will some time wreck the structure. Regret, sorrow, and anguish will mark its ruin.

The Purpose of Life.—He is truly wise who has fulfilled the purpose of his existence. If man's function on earth is to acquire commercial influence, power, and gold; then Jesus should have bowed himself before the powers of evil on the mountain top and worshipped. If the great objective in life is pleasure and amusement; then the builder of barns was wise in his plan to eat, drink, and be merry, even although he was advised that the angel of death would meet him at the twilight hour and demand his soul.

If, however, man's earthly life is but a preparation for the life beyond; he should have a care that the preparation is well made. If virtue, honesty, and faith have more value than bank accounts, social prestige, and fun, then the words of Solomon should be given serious consideration. He had experienced every earthly joy and pleasure wealth could secure. When he had completed his life experience he said,

"This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work unto judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The Rich Man.—"Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores."

Such is a variegated picture of human life. Not many people, if they were free to choose, would select the condi-

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tion of Lazarus as the more desirable. A well-spread table, purple, and fine linen often conceal from human vision the misery of the owner's life and the wretchedness of his soul. A woman's character cannot always be determined by the clothes she wears, nor a man's worth be measured by the automobile he drives.

There are values in life which money cannot buy. Purity, honesty, fidelity, and devotion are qualities which have no market value. Small is the value of bonds, houses, lands, and gold when compared with the spirit that feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and relieves the oppressed.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died, and he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried."

In this pathetic story the great Divinity has pulled back the curtain that humankind might catch a glimpse of the immortal world. The picture tells its own story. Conditions in the lives of the rich man and Lazarus have been reversed. The law of justice pervades the scene. Faith and loyalty have placed Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham. Selfishness and Godlessness have placed the rich man in torment. Their abodes are eternally fixed. There is no return for another chance. The gate is closed forever.

In his anguish and distress, the rich man cried out to Abraham for mercy, and begged him to send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue already parched by the flames of his own torment. To his urgent plea came those maddening words, "Son, remember." Well did he remember. He could do nothing but remember. His past haunted him. He wanted to forget, but regret "is patient and it wakes: it hath not learned to cry itself to sleep." Truly, memory is an unwelcome guest in the sinner's mind.

When selfishness had burned itself out in the rich man's soul, he pleaded with Abraham that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house to warn his five brothers, lest they follow him to eternal destruction and death. He had finally discovered that the value of a man's life is not measured by his gold. In consequence of this tardy conviction, he was most anxious that his brothers learn, before it was too late, the value of righteousness and godliness. He wanted to tell them that the great value in life is the human soul, and that

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a man has no real possession outside of himself, until he uses it in service for humanity. He wanted to tell them to think straight, to estimate carefully the real values of life, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and to fear God and keep his commandments. He wanted to send a message back from the depths of hell that, "the wages of sin is death."

But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead."

The Books Opened.—"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."

In the final judgment, the Nazarene will not appear as a babe in a stable. Crafty Sadducees will not attempt to catch him in his words; no one will buffet him, or spit in his face. No cowardly Pilate will place any crown of thorns on his head; no soldier will pierce his hands or feet.

Christ shall appear in glory and sit as Judge of all the earth. His judgment will be just, and from his verdict there will be no appeal.

"And before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."

By what standard of measurement will this final judgment be rendered? What principle of ethics, code of morals, or system of religion will mark the rewards and punishments? Will surprise or disappointment come to any who stands before his judgment seat?

Sin, however heinous, can be removed by repentance, confession, and obedience, and will consequently bar no one from eternal glory. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Belief and faith in God will merit reward. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live." "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

Humility and sincerity will characterize those who inhabit the kingdom of God. "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever

shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

Loyalty will bring its own reward. "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven."

A persistent determination and effort to do the will of God will not be without recognition before the court of God's judgment. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Such a standard has been presented for the measurement of humankind. Good deeds can save no man. They, however, indicate his motives and the character of his life. A tree is generally known by the fruit it produces.

The test and judgment of God is being constantly registered in the daily experiences of men on the earth. What is their attitude toward the daily problems which test character? By what principle do they make their choices? What guide do they follow in their human relationships? What interests command their leisure time? What place does God occupy in their life? The final judgment alone will reveal their earthly record. Those who are ashamed of God and his religion will be embarrassed before the great white throne. Those who do not forgive their enemies on earth will find their own sins unforgiven. Those who refuse to follow the light as it is presented to them will find themselves groping in eternal darkness. Those who wait for a more convenient season will wait too long, and will one time know that God is no respecter of persons.

What is true for the wicked is equally true for the righteous. He that confesses God in his life will be commended by the omnipotent Judge. He that leadeth some life from sin will receive a worthy crown. He that is faithful in a few things will be honored with a larger responsibility. He that trusts in God and places his life under the control of the Holy Spirit will not be disappointed on the Judgment Day.

"Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

Happy is he who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. His record will be clear when the books are opened.

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by stewardship?
2. State definitely and briefly the purpose of human life.
3. In what particular did the interests of the rich man operate against a worthy life purpose?
4. Is suffering or hardship an indication of God's displeasure?
5. Is it probable that any will be surprised by the standard God will use on the Judgment Day for measuring men?
6. What will determine the character of the final rewards and punishments?
7. Is it possible that any individual can be certain of his own eternal salvation or doom?
8. State briefly the most accurate measuring rod for human life.

LESSON 50

A Review Test—I

Concerning each of the following Bible quotations, each member of the class should be able to answer the following three questions:

- (a) Who said it, and to whom was it said?
 - (b) Under what circumstances was it said?
 - (c) What is its application to modern life?
-

1. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matthew 3: 10.

2. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. Matthew 4: 10.

3. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5: 8.

4. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6: 33.

5. They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Matthew 9: 12.

6. Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3: 3.

7. Never man so spake. John 7: 46.

8. He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. John 8: 7.

9. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. John 4: 23.

10. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. Matthew 10: 39.

11. Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3.

12. For there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. Mark 9:39.

13. It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:23.

14. Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21.

15. What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Mark 12:29-31.

16. No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke 9:62.

17. She hath done what she could. Mark 14:8.

18. Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee: and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? Luke 12:20.

19. Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. Luke 19:8.

20. What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? Matthew 26:15.

21. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh. Matthew 24:44.

22. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Matthew 26:41.

23. I know not the man. Matthew 26:72.

24. What then shall I do unto Jesus, who is called Christ? Matthew 27:22.

25. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20.

LESSON 51

A Review Test—II

Concerning each of the following Bible quotations, each member of the class should be able to answer the following three questions:

- (a) Who said it, and to whom was it said?
 - (b) Under what circumstances was it said?
 - (c) What is its application to modern life?
-

26. The tree is known by its fruits. Matthew 12:33.

27. When I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. Acts 24:25.

28. There is no respect of persons with God. Romans 2:11.

29. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Second Corinthians 3:6.

30. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7.

31. Set your mind on things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. Colossians 3:2.

32. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. First Timothy 6:10.

33. Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Second Timothy 2:15.

34. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Second Timothy 4:7.

35. To the pure all things are pure. Titus 1:15.

36. If God is for us, who is against us? Romans 8:31.

37. My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of him;
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Hebrews 12:5, 6.

38. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. James 1:12.

39. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7.

40. Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. James 1:27.

41. Faith apart from works is barren. James 2:20.

42. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God, whom he hath not seen. First John 4:20.

43. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2:10.

44. Now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2.

45. For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. Second Corinthians 5:1.

46. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it. First Corinthians 10:13.

47. The fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. First Corinthians 3:13.

48. We must obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29.

49. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. John 18:37.

50. What think ye of the Christ? Matthew 22:42.

LESSON 52

Geographical Review

Significant Facts to be Remembered:

A suitable map should be used in connection with this lesson. All places suggested should be located on the map. The importance of these places should be emphasized.

1. Mount Hermon is located on the northeastern border of Palestine. It is 9,500 feet high and was a great sanctuary of Baal worship.

2. Bethlehem, one of the oldest towns in Palestine, was prominent in Jacob's time and was fortified by Rehoboam. It was the birthplace of David and Jesus and has a population at the present time of 3,000, all of whom are Christians.

3. Nazareth was the native town of Jesus. It is situated in Galilee among the southern hills of the Lebanon mountains near the Plain of Esdraelon. It has a population of approximately 3,500 people; some of whom are Mohammedans, the remainder are Greek and Latin Christians.

4. Hebron, a town of Judah, is situated twenty miles south of Jerusalem, and was an important town when Abram first entered Canaan. Hebron is prominent in Bible history as the place of Sarah's death and the place where Abraham bought the field and cave of Machpelah as a family burial ground. At the present time its population is 5,000 people.

5. Cana was the native town of Nathaniel and the place where Jesus performed his first miracle. It is situated in Galilee not far from Capernaum.

6. Capernaum is situated on the western shore of the Lake of Galilee. Here was a synagogue built by a Roman centurion and a custom's station where taxes and duties were

collected. Jesus made his home in Capernaum after leaving Nazareth.

7. Gethsemane, an orchard or park, was situated about one-half mile from the walls of Jerusalem at the foot of Mount Olivet. This place is prominent in Bible history as the site of the agony of Jesus on the evening preceding his trial.

8. Mount Gerizim bordered the valley of Shechem on the south. Here a temple was built by Sanballot, where a priesthood and altar were established in rivalry to the Jewish religion. At the foot of Mount Gerizim was the land Jacob purchased from the children of Hamor and where he dug his well. Here also Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman.

9. Bethsaida was the native town of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. It was situated in the land of Genesareth on the west side of the Lake of Galilee.

10. Damascus was founded by Uz, the great-grandson of Shem. It was first named in Scripture as the native town of Abraham's steward, and later as the place where the Apostle Paul received from Ananias instructions for his work.

11. Antioch, founded in 300 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, was the capital of the Greek kings of Syria and was situated at the junction of the Taurus and Lebanon mountains. Near Antioch was the Daphne, the celebrated sanctuary of Apollo. Here was founded the first Gentile church and here Jesus' disciples were first called Christians. Antioch was the headquarters of Paul during his missionary activity.

12. Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, was the native city of the Apostle Paul.

13. Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia, was the city in which Paul preached for a period of two years on the third and last missionary journey.

14. Gadara was a city situated near the Hieromax river on the east side of the Lake of Galilee. Near this city Jesus healed the demoniac.

15. Bethany was situated near the Mount of Olives and near the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. Here Jesus frequently visited the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

16. Jericho was the place visited by the two spies sent out by Joshua. Here were the homes of Rahab and Zacchaeus. Here, also Elisha healed the waters.

17. Mount Tabor is situated on the northeastern border

of the Plain of Esdraelon and seven miles east of Nazareth. Barak, on advice from Deborah, assembled his forces on Mount Tabor prior to his attack on Sisera. Here were murdered the sons of Gideon.

18. Paphos was a town in the western end of the island of Cypress. Here Barnabas and Saul converted Sergius Paulus in opposition to the efforts of the sorcerer, Elymas.

19. Lystra was situated in the eastern part of the great plain of Lycaonia, and was the native town of Timothy. Here Paul was considered a god by the natives, and was later stoned by them.

20. Joppa was situated on the southwestern coast of Palestine. Solomon used it as the port of Jerusalem and here Jonah embarked in an effort to escape from the work God had commanded him to do. Here also, in the home of Simon the tanner, Peter saw his vision of God's plan for the Gentiles.

21. The Mount of Olives is located near Jerusalem on the east side. The flight of David, the idolatry of Solomon, and the betrayal of Jesus have rendered this elevation prominent in Bible history.

22. Achaia, as named in the New Testament, included the entire southern peninsula of Greece.

23. Salamis was a city situated on the eastern end of the island of Cyprus and was the first city visited by Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey. Many Jews had located in this Grecian city and had built synagogues.

24. Mars' Hill was a rocky elevation in Athens opposite the western end of the Acropolis. The place is famous as the meeting place of the Council of Areopagus. This council was the criminal court of the Greeks prior to the time of Solon. Here Paul preached his sermon to the Greeks on the theme of the unknown god.

25. Golgotha was the Hebrew name of the place where Jesus was crucified. It was an elevation outside of the walls of Jerusalem where criminals were executed. Calvary was the Latin name for Golgotha.

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